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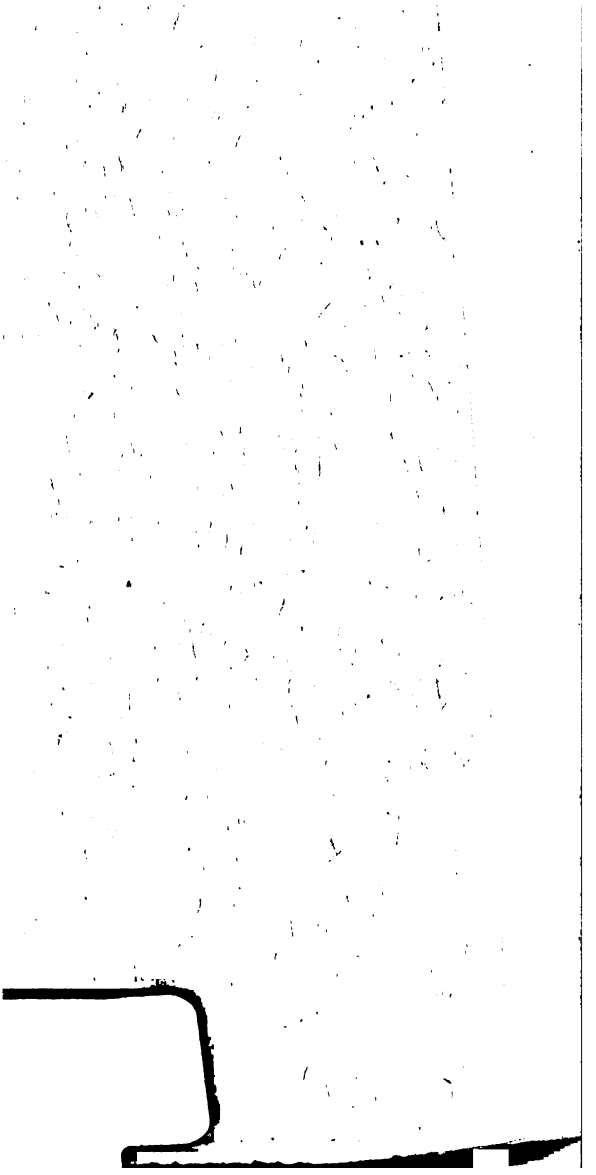

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MOSSDALE—Frontispiece.

MOSSDALE:

A Tale.

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MOSSDALE.

CHAPTER I.

"Through many a dark and dreary vale
They passed, and many a region dolorous."

MILTON.

PICTURE to yourself a narrow valley, with very high and rugged mountains on either side, and having huge masses of rock and large stones lying scattered about in all directions —many of them deeply imbedded in the ground, and completely overgrown with a profusion of thick, soft moss in a variety of the most beautiful shades, varying from the lightest and brightest green to a dusky brown, and the darkest olive colour. On one side of the valley runs a rapid stream of clear and sparkling water, murmuring, bubbling, and gurgling over its bed of smooth stones. Such is Mossdale, or, as it is there called, *Moosthal*, in Alsace—not far from Switzerland on the one hand, nor from Germany in another direction.

Owing to its narrowness, and the great height and ruggedness of the mountains on each side, the valley would always be rather dark and gloomy-looking, were it not that, stretching from north to south, on a gentle declivity, it has the full benefit of the sun's rays during a part of the day; but as the dawn is of course later in appearing there than in the plain, and the sun also sets proportionately earlier, the length of the days—more especially in the winter time—is somewhat curtailed, a circumstance which is not calculated to give the place a cheerful aspect. But a profusion of wild-flowers and creeping plants—many of them of gay colours—growing in the clefts of the rocks, thus covering a part of their ruggedness, and gracefully concealing the extreme harshness of their bold outlines, greatly relieved the gloom. A number of birds, attracted to this sheltered spot, also enlivened it with their brisk movements and joyous notes. One part of the valley is somewhat wider than the rest; and the ground here having recently been cleared of the masses of rock and loose stones which encumber it elsewhere, there stands—however incongruous it may appear in such a place—*a factory*, built of stone, and the machinery in which is set in motion by a large water-wheel turned by the gurgling stream. At a short distance from the factory is a house in the Swiss-cottage style, having a newly-made garden in front, as yet rather bare of vegetation. In this garden, and looking towards the factory, stand a gentleman and lady—Mr and Mrs Harebell.

Mr Harebell, who might be about five-and-forty

years of age, was well-favoured, having a broad, intellectual-looking forehead, and his whole countenance beaming with intelligence, bearing the impress, too, of very extraordinary powers of mind, united to a child-like simplicity of character.

Mrs Harebell, now approaching forty, was still a very comely person, or rather, still very pretty, with such a kindly, cheery, happy face as was a pleasure to look upon. She was the first to speak, saying:

"How clever you are, Alaric—how very clever you are, to have planned and done all this so well, and in so short a time! How fortunate it was, too, that you could have this ground so cheap, the place being, as it is, so exceedingly snug and sheltered."

"Why, as to the situation," remarked Mr Harebell, hesitatingly, and rather anxiously, "I don't know—I don't feel quite easy about it. You and the girls may find it very dull; and——"

"Oh! pray, don't torment yourself with such needless fears," broke in Mrs Harebell. "We shall be much too busy to feel *dull*, take my word for it," she said. "How fine the air is! and what an agreeable odour of wild thyme! and how sweetly the birds are singing!—at least to judge of their songs by so much as the noise of the water-wheel will permit us to hear." She smilingly added: "But, I can assure you, that the splashing of that water-wheel is far more agreeable to my ears at present than would be the sweetest music."

"Yes," said her husband, "I understand that, for so it is to mine—telling of difficulties overcome, and giving hope for the future of prosperous industry and

its consequences—comfort and independence. You look upon the matter in a right way; in a *cheerful, hopeful, right way*," he said. "We must now try to make the best of it, which I feel sure *you* will do. And that is a great comfort and encouragement to me to know," he said, affectionately taking the hand that she had laid on his shoulder.

It is not necessary to enter into any of the details of what had led Mr Harebell, an Englishman, to purchase land and erect a factory in Alsace, as they are immaterial to this narrative. Suffice it to say, that he had thought fit so to do; and the whole had been completed, the house also built, only a short time before he has been introduced to the reader.

The family consisted, besides Mr and Mrs Harebell, of their eldest son, Christopher, now approaching twenty years of age—of a slow, quiet, thoughtful disposition, not at all like his father, to whom, however, he was of great assistance; Lilian and Maud, girls of from sixteen to eighteen—Lilian, handsome, high-spirited, and rather passionate, but generous and affectionate—Maud, pretty, timid, irresolute, and rather inclined to artifice, through cowardice, although, being strictly honourable and upright at heart, she blamed herself severely, and suffered acutely, whenever she had been guilty of any such meanness, as was owing much more to the effect of weakness of character than want of principle. Next in age came Walter and Jasper, boys of from ten to twelve; and lastly, Bertha, a very sweet and lovely child of five years of age, and the pet and darling of the whole family.

CHAPTER II.

"Meeting with Time—Slack thing, said I,
Thy scythe is dull; whet it for shame.
No marvel, Sir, he did reply,
If it at length deserve some blame:
But where one man would have me grind it,
Twenty for one too sharp do find it.
* * * * *
For where thou only wert before
An executioner at best,
Thou art a gardn'er now, and more."

GEORGE HERBERT.

MR HAREBELL had no easy task before him as a cotton-spinner in this secluded place in Alsace. Aided by an overlooker of but very inferior capacity, he had to instruct the work-people, new to the employment, and very inapt at learning; and, moreover, as stupidly obstinate and proudly self-opinionated, as very ignorant people so often are.

The greater part of them were extremely indigent, gaining a very scanty subsistence by working on the land, and living in such a way as in England would

be thought wretchedly poor and comfortless, suffering innumerable hardships and miseries from their extreme poverty, and having at best such a bare maintenance, they were not in the habit of laying anything by. Nor could it be expected; and therefore, in cases of sickness or misfortune, there being no workhouse or any such institution in the neighbourhood, their only choice was to beg or starve.

And, besides, little remunerative as was their labour in the land, it was very far from affording a sufficiency of employment for the bulk of the population in the locality. The consequence of which was, that in a family of six or eight persons capable of earning, one-half that number might perhaps be regularly employed, whilst the remainder had little or nothing to do.

One would have been led to suppose that in such a place to establish a means of providing the people with an abundance of much more lucrative employment than any they had hitherto been able to obtain —which the working of a factory in Mossdale would effect to a very considerable degree — would be unanimously regarded by them as a great and notable benefit, and hailed with gladness; but it was only by a few of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood that it was looked upon in any such light, whilst the others were inclined to regard it with distrust and suspicion as an unwelcome innovation, and to look upon Mr Harebell with rather hostile feelings as an impertinent intruder.

In order somewhat to lighten his labours—some-

times very heavy under existing circumstances—Mr Harebell had decided, after talking the matter over with his son Christopher, to try to procure an efficient overlooker from England, rightly judging that a clever young man would probably soon be able to make himself sufficiently master of the language; and had accordingly caused a suitable advertisement to be inserted in one of the principal English newspapers, which was not long ere it met with a reply from a Mr Henry Meadows, who proposed himself as a candidate for the situation, and who, after a short correspondence, during which he furnished highly-satisfactory testimonials, as well in regard to his abilities for filling the proposed situation, as to his character, Mr Harebell had engaged him; and he had now arrived in Mossdale a few weeks ago. In the testimonials, however—otherwise so fully satisfactory ——the referees had given very few particulars, and very scanty information respecting Mr Meadows' antecedents; but as these referees were, by reputation at least, known to Mr Harebell as people of some importance and great respectability, he contented himself with the measure of information they had thought fit to give, and which, in point of fact, was amply sufficient for the purpose; and thought that in regard to further particulars, it would suffice to learn them later from the young man himself.

On first seeing Henry Meadows, Mr Harebell felt decidedly prepossessed in his favour; for he was a pleasing-looking young man of about four-and-twenty, with a handsome, intelligent countenance; but on

attempting to converse with him, more particularly if touching on anything regarding himself, he found him repulsively cold and reserved. His brows were often contracted as with mental or physical suffering, and a cloud of gloom would sometimes settle upon his dark, pale face.

"Meadows is not a pleasant fellow," said Christopher, in vexation. "I can't understand him!"

Meanwhile he did not complain of anything; was scrupulously attentive to his duties, irreproachably exact in fulfilling all Mr Harebell's orders, and indefatigable in studying to make himself master of the language spoken by the workpeople,* and in which he was already making rapid progress; retiring to his room to study at every spare moment. For as they had a room at liberty, and as Mr Harebell thought it would be advisable for the overlooker to be as near the works as possible, he had provided him with one in his own house.

* The peasantry speak a German *patois*, and the educated people, mostly French; but in this narrative, conversations with either will be rendered in English.

CHAPTER III.

"For the violet's breath perfumeth
The open air around,
And the gentle snowdrop bloometh
Where none beside are found."

DESCENDING Mossdale, and passing out at the lower end, the entrance to another and much wider valley is immediately approached, where the contiguous mountains are no longer so rugged, and are clothed with pine forests on the one side, and on the other with vineyards and other cultivated ground, above which are wild tracts of land stretching far and wide, covered with heath and gorse in flower. Amongst the cultivated ground, some is allotted to corn, and some to colza, with its bright yellow blossoms, whose strong perfume scents the air all around for some distance. The fresh green of the vines, the wavy corn, the gay colza blossoms, and the varied colours of the heath and gorse in flower, form indeed a most pleasing whole; more especially when contrasted with the dark pine forests on the opposite side of the valley.

Passing along this wider valley, and at the distance of about a mile from Mossdale, is a village we will call Gemsendorph, and which, seen from a distance, looks pretty and picturesque, with its church on an eminence, plots of cultivated land and trees interspersed amongst its cottages; but it only looks pleasing when viewed from a considerable distance; for, alas! any such idea is quickly dispelled on a nearer inspection.

But let us now in fancy accompany Mr Harebell, as, with his son Christopher, he enters the village and takes his way to one of the cottages, where resided a numerous family, comprising several grown-up sons and daughters, of whom Mr Harebell wished to engage one or more to work in the factory; the rather, as he had been informed that they were in great poverty, and therefore thought it would be doing them a benefit.

They had now entered the village; a narrow road, very uneven and dirty, being littered with refuse of various kinds. On each side of this narrow road were houses and vegetable gardens; but many of the gardens were in great disorder, and the houses irregularly built and awkwardly placed. One would stand so forward as to very inconveniently encroach upon the road, already too narrow; its next neighbour, on the contrary, retreated so much as to leave an untidy open space, which, instead of forming a small flower-garden or anything of that kind, served only as an additional receptacle for dirt and disorder, besides containing a pig-sty and dunghill; whilst the third house would present only a gable end jutting out into

the road; and the fourth would perhaps stand quite crookedly, as if the builder, unable to decide how to place it, had at length cast it down at random, neither lengthwise nor endwise to the road, but aslant. Some of the houses were only approachable by traversing a small yard, partly inclosed by a half broken-down wall or other fence, which intervened between them and the road, containing a stable or cow-shed, and perhaps also a pig-sty, and furnished in the centre with a sort of pit filled with manure, slightly covered over with branches of fir—the miasma from which was, of course, exceedingly unpleasant—and over which it was necessary to pass in order to gain the door of entrance.

It was to such a house as this that Mr Harebell and his son now approached, picking their way as best they could across the littered yard, and feeling at every step the fir branches give way under their weight, and their feet come into contact with the unpleasant compound beneath.

Mr Harebell might have done the errand by deputy, and so have spared himself the annoyance of this disagreeable visit, if he had only consulted his own inclination; but on former the like occasions, he had found that plan very unsuccessful, and, being a humane man, and therefore having really at heart to better the condition of the people—for it so happened that he was not now in want of work-people, the case being merely that *if he had more*, he could *find them some employment*;—consequently he had come to do the errand for himself, in order to see whether he might not succeed better.

An ill-clad, dejected, emaciated, and dirty-looking woman stood idly at the door. She might be about forty-eight, but looked more like seventy, and only just sufficiently made room, so that by brushing past her they could enter; whilst she told them—not very civilly—that her husband was within, and they could speak with him if such was their wish.

On entering, they found themselves in a low room, in which the air was very stifling, the flooring of boards quite black with dirt, the ceiling also black. In one corner was a stove, on which some kind of mess was simmering in a brown earthenware pan, and the apartment was filled with smoke from the green wood and fir branches burning in the stove; by the side of which—although the weather was very warm—cowered the husband of the woman at the door, apparently a feeble old man, much bent with age, though in truth he was but little more than fifty. On the other side of the stove sat—on a bench that was propped against the wall because one of the legs was gone, his clothing very ragged—a lubberly young man of seventeen or eighteen years of age, in perfect idleness; whilst a sickly-looking, ragged girl of thirteen or fourteen was rocking a cradle, in which lay a child of at least two years old; which, although of that age, could yet hardly walk, no one having taken the trouble to teach it, but, on the contrary, having kept it almost constantly in bed, to be out of the way, and, as much as possible, asleep; consequently, the poor little creature's limbs had no strength, and its head had grown quite disproportionately large.

"Well, Holzhacker," said Mr Harebell, "I'm come to see whether any of your sons would like to work with me?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," he replied, in a weak, tremulous voice, and at the same time making a sign to his son to give the visitors places on the bench, which, however, the other only did by moving nearer to the end, and so making room for them beside him. But the bench was not securely enough propped to bear the weight of the three, and fell to the floor. Whereupon, as the young man was propping it up again, Mr Harebell could not forbear saying to him, though having noticed, when he saw him stand, that he, too, was ill-formed and looked weak:

"I should think, youngster, you might easily mend this bench."

At first, instead of making any reply, he only stared stupidly; but, after an instant, said:

"Who'll give me anything if I mend it? Will you?"*

Mr Harebell again addressed the father, saying:

"Where are your other sons; and how are they occupied now?"

"The two eldest, and one of the girls, are gone to fetch fire-wood from the forest. Have been gone since morning. We're waiting supper for them. It's a long way to where they went; but I think they might have returned by now," he said, in a fretful tone.

* This conversation—as all others with the peasantry—was in provincial German.

But, just then, a loud rushing, scraping noise was heard, and such a cloud of dust arose in the road, as effectually to prevent Mr Harebell and Christopher from seeing from the open door of the house any object that might be approaching. But Holzhacker and his wife seemed to understand what the noise and dust betokened, for he said:

"They are coming now," whilst the woman left her watching at the door, turned inside, and began to stir the mess in the pan on the stove.

When the cloud of dust came nearer, however, what caused it was seen in the appearing of people dragging after them, with great labour, large bundles of wood and long trailing branches of trees bound together by ropes, and leaving them to scrape along the ground, thus causing the burden to be very heavy by the force of friction, and almost stifling themselves with dust. They were two young men, and a girl, a few years older than the one rocking the cradle. All three were haggard-looking, ragged and dirty, and seemed very much wearied, as, leaving their dusty burdens lying in the middle of the floor, nearly filling up the whole space—having left only the longest branches in the yard outside—they threw themselves on the bench, which had been vacated by Mr Harebell, Christopher, and Holzhacker's other son, and which again broke down, and was again set up.

"I will go now," said Mr Harebell, "for I should be sorry to interrupt you in your supper; but before I leave, I should like to know whether you and these young people would not think it better to have such

easy, regular employment as I could furnish them with, and to receive good pay, than to be toiling in this way for a mere trifle, or doing nothing?"

A silence of some seconds ensued, when the child in the cradle awoke and began to cry, very evidently wishing to be taken up; but the mother only told the girl to rock it more vigorously, which she accordingly did; and soon, apparently despairing of gaining its point, it ceased crying, and with its eyes wide open, fixed them in an idiotic stare on the black rafters of the ceiling.

"As to working for very little," at length said the father of the family, dejectedly, and with his feeble voice, "that's true, for we hardly get enough to buy salt to the potatoes.* The supper we are about to have consists only of bread-and-water soup, with a little grease in it; and we have hardly sufficient. Oh! dear, we're very poor people. If you would give us a trifle of money to help us, it would be doing us a great charity; it would, indeed!"

"Who is to fetch the wood, if the lads go to work in the factory?" said his wife, in a peevish tone; and then added, in a whining manner, "We're so badly off for clothes, sir, couldn't Mrs Harebell send me a dress? I'm sure I'd be much obliged for it—and a dress for each of the girls? and some clothes for the child in the cradle? I've scarcely anything to put on it; and that's one reason why it's left so long in bed. And we've scarcely any bedding; and if you would be so good as to send us a couple of mattresses, and——"

* A saying, expressive of poor and scanty diet.

"Well, well," exclaimed Mr Harebell, impatiently, "we'll see about assisting you in some way; but the first thing to decide now is, about furnishing your children with suitable employment, by which they may gain so much more than they do at present; and then, you know, when you will have more money, you may easily procure the wood in some other way, besides more clothing, and all other necessaries."

Both husband and wife, seeming to understand this reasoning, made no further opposition, and therefore it depended upon the children themselves to decide. The eldest son, called Bernard, came forward and boldly said he would like at once to be engaged; and Mr Harebell was on the point of taking him at his word, when one of the others, who seemed to have been consulting together, plucked him by his tattered sleeve, and whispered something in his ear, whereupon poor Bernard, becoming very red, and looking confused and ashamed, stammered out, "that he would rather not," and retreated into a corner.

"Ah! I knew how it would be," said his father; "it's of no use."

"The fact is," said his mother, "that he has no decent clothes to put on. No more have the others; and they're afraid of being sneered at in the factory. You see, sir, going to fetch wood from the forest makes sad work with the clothes."

A glance at the countenances of the young people convinced Mr Harebell that the mother had given the true reason for Bernard's sudden retractation, and probably also for the silence of the others; and, after

some slight consideration, he offered to provide each of them who would come to work in the factory with a new suit of clothes on entering, the cost to be defrayed only by very slow instalments out of the ample wages that he intended to give them, and himself taking the risk that, when once possessed of the clothes, the young people would refuse to fulfil the engagement. They all now came forward and joyfully assented. But their father did not seem quite satisfied, and represented to Mr Harebell that it would be better were he to give him the money required for the clothing, so that he might procure it all ready, and spare him the trouble. This, however, the latter had his reasons for peremptorily refusing to do. And as he and Christopher were leaving the house, the mother followed them into the yard, on pretence of taking out of their way some of the long branches left there by the wood-carriers, and, coming close to Mr Harebell, she said:

"Oh! sir, don't give the money to my husband; pray, don't! Neither the children nor I would be the better for it if you did. He'd only go with it into a public-house until it was all spent."

With mingled feelings of pity and disgust, Mr Harebell and his son returned to Mossdale, discoursing, as they journeyed along, on the marked difference between the villagers of England, both as regards social position and good breeding, and those poor people they had just left.

CHAPTER IV.

"A youth, light-hearted and content,
I wander through the world;
Here, Arab-like, is pitched my tent
And straight again is furl'd."

LONGFELLOW.

ON entering the house, Mr Harebell found visitors. The newly-appointed *garde-général*,* and Mr Mond, a manufacturer from a neighbouring town, and already known to the Harebells, who came to introduce the other—Mr Sommerfogel, a young man of about twenty-six. Tall, and rather handsome, dressed in a very gay uniform of silver and green, with so long a gold watch-chain that it crossed more than once over his breast, and with many glittering rings on his one ungloved hand, the garde-général made a very brilliant appearance. He spoke elegant French, in a very agreeable voice, and the graceful ease of his manner, and the good-humour of his

* A *garde-général* is an upper forest-keeper, employed by Government, and having the direction and control over a number of under forest-keepers. The situation is considered an honourable and gentlemanly one, but the pay is extremely small.

countenance, expressive of such perfect confidence in, and reliance on, the good-will and kind intentions of those whom he addressed, made him decidedly pleasing; and accordingly he made a very favourable impression upon the Harebells.

Mr Mond explained that his friend, Mr Sommerfogel was in search of a lodging, and much regretted not having been able to meet with any in Gemsendorph; and concluded by inquiring whether the Harebells happened to know of one in the village that might suit?

They all, however, either said they knew of none, or remained silent. Whereupon Mr Mond said he was very sorry—very sorry, indeed; and, speaking in a low tone, whilst the garde-général was engaged in conversation with the young people—

"For," said he, "it will be a very serious inconvenience to my worthy young friend, if he is compelled to lodge so far from the scene of his duties, as is the next town. And as he could not afford to hire a conveyance of any kind, only consider what the fatigue would be, not to mention the loss of time, of having continually to perform the distance on foot."

Mrs Harebell, who had been silent on the subject until then, overhearing this speech, did not think it well to remain so any longer; and, with some reluctance and hesitation, said that she knew of a widow in Gemsendorph who had a larger house than she required, and had expressed a wish to have a lodger; but added:

"Widow Schlosser lives in such a poor way—so dirty,

too, and disorderly, the house is so miserably furnished, and, in fact, the whole place is really so very common and uncomfortable, that I am almost ashamed to mention it, much less could I recommend it, as a suitable lodging for your friend, and——"

But Mr Mond interrupted her by saying that he was very glad to hear of it, and thought it might suit very well; and calling to Mr Sommerfogel, at once acquainted him with the welcome news, who seemed much pleased to hear it; and, saying that he should like to see the lodging without loss of time, took leave of the Harebells. Mr Mond accompanied him, but said that he would shortly return and inform Mrs Harebell of the result of the inspection; which she felt curious, but at the same time rather uncomfortable in hearing—by no means feeling assured that she had done well in naming the place.

It was not long ere Mr Mond returned, and Mrs Harebell rather uneasily awaited his communication. But she might have spared herself all uneasiness on the subject, as she soon saw.

"My dear madam," began Mr Mond, "my young friend is delighted with the lodging—just the thing for him—and he has at once engaged it, and is now gone to the next town to fetch his things, and will establish himself in his new dwelling as quickly as possible. I am very glad; it's quite a weight off my mind to know him so comfortably settled; and we are both much obliged to you for kindly aiding us in the matter."

On Mr Mond's departure, Mrs Harebell expressed

how much surprised she was to find that the garde-général and his friend could be pleased—the one, with such a lodging, and the other in seeing him so established!

However, only a few days after this, an opportunity occurred for the Harebells to hear further particulars as to how Mr Sommerfogel felt suited in his accommodation at Widow Schlosser's. Christopher was sent there with an invitation to him. On approaching the house he heard, through the open windows, a man's voice, singing gaily to the accompaniment of a guitar. In order to reach the door of entrance—which also stood wide open—Christopher had to pass through a rough, dirty, and disorderly-looking piece of ground, called a garden, but in which little of anything seemed to be growing, excepting a few cabbages, and where a pig was rooting in the ground, a hen with her brood of chickens scratching in all directions, and two or three ragged children amusing themselves with some muddy water in making puddles. Entering the house, and mounting the crazy staircase—which required some care in the doing, many of the steps being so rotten that it was evidently necessary, for a due regard to safety, to press on them as lightly as possible, and, notwithstanding every precaution, they creaked ominously—he rapped at the door of the garde-général's apartment, whence proceeded the sounds of the singing and guitar; but he had to knock several times before he could make himself heard by the musical inmate, but at length succeeded. And then the door was thrown open,—it very nearly parted company with

the hinges, which were in a dilapidated condition, and had to be hooked on again,—and Mr Sommerfogel appeared ready to fall on his neck, so much pleased did he seem to see him. And he really was glad. Whilst saying, however, that he was "perfectly enchanted," and placing for him, with graceful politeness, a very dirty, common straw-covered chair, very decidedly much the worse for wear—and to get at which he had to displace a large pile of torn music-books in disorder—he begged him to be seated.

The room was so very meanly furnished, and made so poor and shabby an appearance, that on first entering, Christopher felt almost afraid to look around, lest by so doing he might embarrass and annoy the occupier; but he soon perceived his mistake, for he was scarcely seated when Mr Sommerfogel, with an air of genuine satisfaction, said:

"What do you think of my lodging? Is it not charming? See, this shelf for my books, is it not convenient? and these pegs for hanging up my coats, how useful? and this cupboard, how commodious?"

The room was moderately-sized, and rather low, with white-washed walls; at least, it may be supposed that they had once been white, though now they were so dirty, as in many parts to be nearer black, on which hung a few little pictures—mere daubs—in shabby wooden frames; a large stove, partly broken, stood in one corner; and in another, the cupboard, of painted wood, but the paint nearly worn off, and the doors of which were in the same state as the door of the room, at variance with the hinges; a common deal table,

just now littered with the remains of a frugal repast—some coarse brown bread, goat's-milk cheese, a cracked glass and broken water-bottle—and having one leg seriously damaged, stood awry in the centre; whilst a dirty sofa and some chairs, all in very bad condition, completed the furniture of the apartment; whose floor, of a very dark colour—had no covering; and the boards being worn extremely rough and uneven by the heavy wooden clogs used by the peasantry, or hobnailed shoes—the wood in some parts being reduced to mere splinters and dust—the consequence of which was, that to walk over the floor raised some portion of this dust into the air, and therefore it was no wonder to see that everything in the room appeared covered with a thick coating of the same.

Christopher had scarcely observed all this, when Mr Sommerfogel, gracefully throwing open a small door, before hidden behind the chair on which he was seated, disclosed to view a closet, or very small room, of about seven feet square, containing a very small bed—so small a bed that, in looking at it, Christopher could not but wonder how Mr Sommerfogel managed to sleep in it—one chair and a little table, which served for washing-stand and dressing-table all in one.

"You see," said the garde-général, "I have my bed-chamber and saloon close together; nothing could be more convenient!"

But just then Christopher caught sight of a little looking-glass, placed very high up, and slanting forwards, in which both he and his companion appeared

as very extraordinary monsters of deformity, one eye very much more elevated than its fellow, one shoulder following the example of the elevated eye, whilst the other and the mouth appeared to be gliding off in quite an opposite direction, and one side of their heads seemed to have grown and flourished very much more than the other.

"Ah!" said Mr Sommerfogel, "you smile to see how well I am lodged! and no wonder! I have laughed myself to think that just when I was despairing of finding a lodging in the village, I should meet with one so completely suitable! and, I say to myself, Augustus Sommerfogel, you're a lucky fellow! But don't go yet, I have some things to show you," he said, as he saw Christopher take up his hat, "mere trifles I call them; perhaps, however, you may think differently, for I am not at all confident, I am very bashful and retiring, and often say to myself, Augustus Sommerfogel, you are too diffident!" and drawing a box from beneath the sofa, he opened it, and taking thence a portfolio, said: "See, what do you think of these sketches? They are not badly done, are they?"

They were tolerably pretty sketches, and Christopher praised them accordingly.

"Stay," said Mr Sommerfogel, "before you go you must see my poor collection of minerals. I might speak differently of them if I were not so very unostentatious." And he drew another box from under the sofa, and opening it, said: "Are they not beautiful? Oh! but I cannot think of allowing you to leave without seeing my botanical specimens. I think

you will admire them very much, although I always say that they are not worth looking at; but, then, that is only my extreme modesty. It really is too ridiculous, is it not, never to see one's own merit in the least? But we have it in the family; the Sommerfogels were always so diffident of themselves!" And from beneath the sofa he drew forth a third box—the space under the sofa seemed filled with boxes:—and Christopher having duly admired both the mineral and botanical specimens, Mr Sommerfogel, having gracefully accepted the invitation to Mossdale, politely escorted his visitor down the creaking and dilapidated staircase, which he then reascended by skips and bounds over two or three of the broken steps at a time; and ere Christopher had waded his way through the garden—avoiding, as much as possible, coming into collision with the pig, the hen and chickens, or the dirty children—the sound of Mr Sommerfogel's voice, and the chords of his guitar, were again filling the air with their harmony.

CHAPTER V.

"Hail, awful thickets, dark and umbrageous bowers
Spangled with morning mist, ye tangled woods,
Where nature, ever gay, spontaneous reigns
In wild luxuriance, throwing from her lap
Ambrosial fragrance on the humid air!"

WIFFEN.

A FEW days later, the garde-général came to dine in Mossdale, according to invitation. Mrs Harebell was rather pleased with the grace and polish of his manners. Mr Harebell thought him a harmless, silly fellow. Lilian was much amused by his lively conversation and sprightliness. Christopher fluctuated between liking him and despising him. But the whole family joined in pronouncing him extremely good-natured, and, upon the whole decidedly amiable.

At table, Mr Sommerfogel was seated between Lilian and Maud; and whilst the former replied to his lively sallies in a somewhat similar strain, the latter, though less talkative, seemed equally amused by them.

Mr Meadows sat opposite to the three, and was even more taciturn than usual. Christopher addressed

him several times, but received such inattentive answers, that he at length laughingly said:

"I think, Meadows, your thoughts must be gone wool-gathering to-day! You don't seem to hear what I say to you!"

Whereupon Mr Meadows reddened, and seemed either angry or embarrassed; Christopher knew not which, but thinking he was annoyed at the remark, he hastened to change the conversation; and the other, rousing himself as from a reverie, was no longer quite so inattentive.

After dinner—which had been early in the day, in accordance with the custom of the country—the weather being very fine, Mr Sommerfogel proposed to the young people to show them a particular walk in the forest with which he was acquainted, and which led to a spot commanding a very extensive view of the surrounding country.

Mr and Mrs Harebell having approved of the proposal, it was gladly accepted by all, excepting Mr Meadows, who said nothing, and little Bertha, kept back by her mother, as too young for so long a walk.

"You'll go with us, Meadows, of course?" said Christopher.

"Well, no; I'm engaged," he answered, gloomily, and with averted look; "I must finish the drawing of a machine, and ——"

"Oh! as to finishing the drawing of the machine, there is not any need for you to remain for that," interposed Mr Harebell; "it will not be wanted yet. I think you had better go with them, it will do you

good; and I don't see any reason why you should not, unless, indeed, you do not feel disposed ——"

"Come along, then! Of course, he feels disposed," interrupted Christopher. "You see you have no excuse now for staying behind!"

Mr Meadows made no further objection, and for an instant seemed to brighten up, and looked pleased; but it was only for an instant, and then any such expression passed away, and left him looking gloomy and anxious.

Lilian and Maud, who had gone to prepare themselves, now re-entered the apartment, and the young people together left the house.

"Henry Meadows seems dissatisfied and out of spirits about something. Although taciturn, he looked much more cheerful some time back. I wonder whether he has become in any way discontented with his position here?" said Mr Harebell.

"Perhaps the reason may be that he does not feel well," remarked his wife.

"Very probably it may. I'm sure he works too hard; and I'm glad that I persuaded him to join in taking this walk."

We will not particularly describe the walk through the magnificent forest of tall pines on that fine summer's evening; the thick carpet of leaves on which they trode—the accumulations of countless autumns—soft, but crackling beneath their feet; the stately pines giving out their refreshing odour; now and again a bird sweetly trilling forth its evening song before going to rest; nimble squirrels, darting from

tree to tree, would quickly cross their path, and as quickly disappear; whilst ever and anon a gentle breeze, first causing a musical rushing and rustling to be heard in the tops of the tallest trees, and then descending, ruffling up the leaves on the path, raising the lightest and driest, and scattering them whirling in all directions, until it finally died away in faint murmurs and indistinct whisperings, as of aërial beings, in low soft tones, cheering or warning the passer by.

This forest clothed the side of one of the steepest mountains, and the pathway leading to the summit was often both steep and rugged.

Mr Sommerfogel politely attended to Lilian and to Maud, and gallantly assisted them forward over the roughest parts of the way, and, with a flow of spirits that never seemed to flag, entertained them with anecdotes and narratives without number, of the birds and other wild animals, and even of the insects they saw in their path; and told them a great deal concerning numerous plants and flowers. They would have preferred that he had talked much less, and left them more tranquilly to enjoy the scene.

Christopher had, on first setting out, joined Mr Meadows, who walked behind; but finding his companion apparently very little inclined to converse, he, after awhile, left him to his own meditations, and joined his sisters and the garde-général.

The boys, Walter and Jasper, were in advance; and a shout was now heard from them, for they had attained the spot to which the party was bound—the

topmost part of the mountain. And soon emerging from the forest, they came on to an open space of table-land, from whence was indeed a widely-extended prospect; and they seated themselves on the thick, soft carpet of moss and short grass with which the ground was well covered. They had been nearly two hours climbing the mountain, and were glad to rest. Near at hand below them were the rocks and rugged hills that completely shut in and hid Mossdale from their view; whilst the valley of Gemsendorph lay stretched out before them, with its rapidly-flowing brook in the midst, like a bright strip of silver, glittering and sparkling in the rays of the setting sun; and the long straggling village, with its white houses interspersed with trees and green plots, as seen from this distance, looking orderly, pretty, and pleasant; and the picturesque old church, with its finely-tapering spire, standing prominently forward on an eminence; whilst farther off, at the distance of about five miles, was to be seen the whole of the nearest town, which we will call Langsamstadt, and which also made a very good appearance *in the distance*, and formed an agreeable object for the eye to rest upon.

The view, on a sudden, of a vast extent of country, is very awe-inspiring to most minds. And as the young Harebells were silently gazing on the captivating scene spread out before them, the bells of the village church commenced their vesper chimes, and the sound rose up so delightfully soft and melodious, now borne on the breeze, rising loud and distinct as if quite near at hand, though still mellowed by the

distance, and anon floating up so sweetly faint and low, as if wafted from some very far-off region, or from dreamland.

Fortunately Mr Sommerfogel, contrary to his wont, had remained for some short time quite silent. The cause, however, was soon apparent: he had been adjusting the pieces of a pocket-flageolet, which now producing, he suddenly commenced playing upon it some of the gayest airs—as ill suited as could well be imagined, both to the scenery around them, and to the present tone of feeling in which were the other members of the party. But the lively musician was indeed very far from suspecting the effects of his music, and continued to execute air after air with tolerable skill, it must be confessed, and a perfectly-placid and self-satisfied countenance; until after awhile he smilingly ceased, and saying—

"I must go now to a farm near at hand to make the arrangements for our descent. Ah! my friends, I have a surprise in store for you! Wait here for my return. I shall not be long absent;" and so saying, whilst looking very important and much pleased, he, with a graceful wave of his hand, disappeared.

The church-bells had also ceased ere this; and the pleasing thoughts and feelings which their sound had raised, had long since been quite put to flight by the very opposing sound of the flageolet; during the garde-général's performance upon which, it seemed Mr Meadows had retired into the forest, for he was not now to be seen on the plateau.

CHAPTER VI.

"Now came still evening on, and twilight grey
Had in her sober livery all things clad:
Silence accompanied; . . . .
. . . . Hesperus that led
The starry host, rode brightest, till the moon,
Rising in clouded majesty, at length,
Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw."

MILTON.

THEY had not waited long ere the garde-général re-appeared, followed by peasants carrying new milk and coarse brown bread; of which simple fare the party gladly partook. But Mr Meadows could not be found; and after searching for him in all directions on the confines of the forest, Mr Sommerfogel stationed a boy from the farm on the plateau to look for him, and to tell him, when he should appear, to come after them; which having done, he requested the other members of the party to follow him, and led them to a declivity on another side of the mountain, where they found a narrow descending zig-zag pathway of about four feet wide, cut in the steep, and in some parts almost perpendi-

cular, side of the mountain; and having pieces of wood laid at distances across it, it formed a so-called sledge-way. And there waiting them were two of the sledges, and four strong peasant men.* A good deal amused, they began to take their places; the seats being formed of loose pieces of wood, piled one upon another; the polite garde-général assisting the young ladies, one into each sledge,—a sledge is capable of holding four persons,—and in attending to Lilian, who, remarking upon the beauty of the evening, was much surprised to hear him say, though his contented and good-humoured countenance strongly belied his words:

"Ah, yes! but how can I enjoy it when my heart suffers?" and he sighed deeply.

Lilian sighed too, and then frowned and felt annoyed and vexed at herself for having done so; but Mr Sommerfogel seemed wrapped in his own thoughts, and continued in a low voice:

"At some future time you will know all, and then you will understand what a heartache I must nów have had!"

"How long you seem to be in arranging yourself!" exclaimed Maud to her sister. "I feel as comfortable as if I were in an arm-chair!"

But no sooner had she said the words than, leaning rather too much to one side, the opposite ends of the pieces of wood flying up, the whole seat slid down

* These sledges are especially intended for transporting firewood, but are also used for other merchandise, and occasionally for facilitating the descent of passengers down the mountains.

and rolled from beneath her; which gave rise to a hearty laugh from Walter and Jasper, joined in by Lilian rather hysterically; and then the wood was readjusted, and Maud again took her place.

Still Mr Meadows did not make his appearance; and the garde-général was urgent to commence the descent, in order to make it whilst daylight yet remained.

"And, besides," he said, "Mr Meadows would no doubt very easily find his way back to Mossdale, even if he missed the party entirely."

No one objected to this; and although Lilian looked as if she wished to remonstrate, yet she remained silent; and Mr Sommerfogel gave his orders to the peasants to proceed with the sledges, who now put them in motion—one man pushing at the back of each, and another holding on at the front to guide and steady it.

Maud, Walter, and Jasper were in the first sledge; whilst Christopher, Lilian, and the garde-général occupied the other.

The sun was beginning to sink behind a neighbouring mountain, casting long shadows, and enveloping the dark pine forests in a deeper gloom, as the sledges moved off and entered the forest, at first slowly, but with quickly-increasing speed; and then swiftly they passed deep precipices, huge masses of rock, lovely ravines, foaming cascades, and picturesque openings giving glimpses of the valley in the distance. But this rapid descent on so narrow a road, with the perpendicular side of the mountain on one hand, and

precipices on the other, in so frail a conveyance, caused Lilian and Maud several times to shudder with fear. Sometimes the narrow sledge-way formed a bridge, without the slightest parapet, over ravines or precipices with roaring cataracts tumbling down their sides; and the good-natured garde-général gave himself some trouble, when he saw how terrified Maud was, to encourage her, in vain assuring her that it was *very seldom* any sledges were overturned.

At one spot, where was an uncommonly deep precipice, down which rushed a foaming cataract, leaping from rock to rock, and dashing off showers of white mist, until it fell with a thundering noise, and all in froth, into a bed of stones in the far-away depth below,—just at this spot, the branch of a tree knocked Lilian's hat from her head, and it fell a considerable distance down the precipice, until, alighting on a projecting ledge of rock, it there remained stationary.

Mr Sommerfogel stopped the sledges; but, at the same time, said that the hat was lost, as the men would not like to make so dangerous an attempt as to try to recover it; to which Lilian promptly replied that on no account would she wish them to do so, and was in the act of tying a handkerchief over her head; and the garde-général had given orders to the men to continue their route, but he quickly stopped them; for at that instant the whole party caught sight of Mr Meadows running on the sledge-way, and very near to them. But just before he overtook them, and ere they were at all aware of his intention, he, to the

horror and consternation of the young Harebells, began with rapidity to descend the abyss. Maud covered her face with her hands; but Lilian, with a fixed gaze, uttered a cry of terror, whilst he with great agility sprang from rock to rock, until he reached the ledge on which the hat lay, and raising it up, he waved it aloft in triumph.

"Bravo! Well done, Meadows!" shouted Walter and Jasper, in high glee and admiration.

Christopher called to him anxiously "to be cautious and mind his footing." But the roar of the cataract was so loud where he stood, that it was not possible for him to hear anything that was said to him from above.

And now Mr Meadows commenced attempting to reascend, which seemed to be no easy matter; for the rocks were rendered very slippery by the mist from the cataract and the wet moss with which they were partially covered—no great hindrance in descending to one who passed over them so quickly and with so light a tread, but a very serious impediment in the way of *climbing up them.* And, besides, the distance between the ledge on which he stood and the perpendicular rock immediately above him, was very great—much greater than that of any of the other intervening spaces between the rocks over which he had passed in descending, and had necessitated the longest and most perilous leap—a leap which he had hesitated an instant before taking, but having then approached so very near to his object, it may be supposed that he was too reluctant to re-

nounce it, and therefore sprang down, without due consideration as to the practicability of retracing his steps.

He made one effort after another to pull himself on to the rock above him; but all in vain. The more he endeavoured to climb to it by placing his hands on it above his head, and thus trying to raise himself sufficiently to be able to spring upon it, the more did his hands slide off; and for some time he continued to waste his strength to no purpose, and then, apparently exhausted, he relinquished his attempts for awhile, only to recommence them to as little purpose.

Lilian burst into a passion of tears. Mr Sommerfogel looked surprised, and then rather amused, but quite unconcerned, as he said:

"Ah! I see he cannot do it—now, less likely than at first, for he is losing strength. No; he will never be able to accomplish it."

Christopher thought that although much less nimble than Mr Meadows, yet he might manage to scramble down as far as to the rock above him, and then by lying down and leaning over, he might help to pull the other up. It was just as probable, however, if he put this plan into execution, that he would be pulled off the rock, as that the other would be drawn up. Nevertheless, he determined to try, and, disencumbering himself of his coat, was about to make the first spring, when he found himself forcibly held back by the garde-général, who said:

"What are you going to do? Are you also deranged?"

"Take your hands off! Let me go, I say!" exclaimed Christopher, roughly endeavouring to shake him off. But the other, being the stronger of the two, held him fast.

"What do you mean? you rascal!" said Christopher in a rage. "Do you think I'm such a coward and villain as you are! to see a man perish without an effort to save him!"

"Oh! Christopher! how can you! how *can* you say!"—— Maud began; but he continued:

"If you don't release me this instant, you villain! I'll strike you in the face!" he said, struggling violently.

"Now, be calm, be calm!" said Mr Sommerfogel, apparently more inclined to laugh than to be angry. "You will not rescue your friend by attempting to descend the abyss: you will only risk your own life. What is wanted to save him is a long rope; perhaps they have one at the farm;" and, turning to one of the peasants, he told him to go and inquire, at the same time loosening his hold of Christopher, who sprang forward after the man going for the rope, thinking he would hasten him on, and muttering:

"Why in the name of fortune did you not mention it sooner?—unfeeling scamp!"

During this altercation, Lilian in vain tried to keep back her tears: they would keep breaking out afresh.

"Well, Lilian, it was not at all your fault," said Maud, endeavouring to comfort her. "Although it was to fetch your hat that Mr Meadows went, you did not know that he was about to do so, or you

would have done your best to prevent it. Therefore, you need not take it so much to heart; and, besides, when they have the rope, he will most likely be got up quite safely."

But she either could not or would not be comforted.

Meanwhile, poor Mr Meadows continued to make more fruitless and desperate efforts. As his strength became more exhausted, his efforts were in proportion more feeble, and, consequently, farther removed from success; seeing which, the two boys, who were anxiously watching him, shouted to him at the top of their voices, in the hope of making themselves heard, to desist and quietly await the expected rope; but all to no purpose: they saw that he did not hear them.

The impassable garde-général, producing a pencil, began to make a sketch in his pocket-book of some neighbouring trees; and the remaining three peasants rested themselves in phlegmatic and stupid indifference on the projecting ends of the sledges.

The daylight, however, began very perceptibly to fade, and Mr Sommerfogel found that there was not sufficient left for him to continue his occupation of sketching.

The bottom of the abyss, where the roaring cataract found its bed, could only now be very indistinctly seen from above, and appeared, in consequence, to be at a much greater depth—almost immeasurable; whilst the deafening sound of the water, tumbling and roaring amongst the rocks, loose stones, and fallen trees, in the dim, shadowy distance, until lost to view, seemed to become louder

and more terrible, and to fill the undefined space with horrors.

But the moon now slowly rose in full splendour, casting its cold, silvery light over the tops of the dark pines, causing them to appear still darker than when seen by daylight, and, as they waved to and fro in the breeze, making them look like so many jet-black plumes, very gloomy; whilst some of the rocks were brilliantly white in the moonlight, and that part of the cataract exposed to its beams sparkled and glittered in its soft light like the most finely-burnished silver imaginable.

The abyss, however, did not look at all less terrible now than in the fading daylight—rather the reverse; for the moonbeams, not being able to penetrate far down, did not aid in showing the true depth, but, on the contrary, caused the portion left in the shade to appear both darker and deeper by the contrast.

CHAPTER VII.

"Long ago,
In the deer-haunted forests of Maine,
When upon mountain and plain
Lay the snow,
They fell—those lordly pines!
Those grand, majestic pines!
'Mid shouts and cheers
The jaded steers,
Panting beneath the goad,
Dragged them down the weary, winding road
Those captive kings so straight and tall,
To be shorn of their streaming hair,
And, naked and bare,
To feel the stress and the strain
Of the wind and the reeling main,
Whose roar
Would remind them for evermore
Of their native forests they should not see again."

LONGFELLOW.

WALTER and Jasper were still eagerly watching Mr Meadows as well as they could see him now in the dim light; for the rock above him had cast a dark shadow on to that on which he was; and he still seemed to be alternately making fruitless efforts, or resting exhausted. As for

Lilian and Maud, it had become too painful to them to look down any longer. The former had her eyes intently fixed in the direction that Christopher and the peasant had taken when they went to fetch the rope; and she was the first to see them now as they returned, and touching her sister on the shoulder—

"Look! they are coming, and they have a rope," she said, whilst her voice was tremulous with emotion.

"Ah! here they are, how quick they have been!" said the garde-général; but to the young Harebells how long the time had seemed! and to poor Mr Meadows, probably, interminably long!

The rope was at once lowered, and eagerly watched, for there were fears that it would not prove sufficiently long. They could perceive, however, that it fully reached to where Henry Meadows was, who seemed to seize hold of it; but Christopher and the men had only just commenced pulling it in, and had raised the human form at the end of it only a short distance from the ledge of rock, when he most unaccountably relinquished his hold, and, to their horror, they saw him fall back upon the extreme edge of the rock. Had he fallen a few inches farther out he would have gone to the bottom of the abyss, and been dashed to pieces! And there he lay, apparently, an inert mass.

"Oh, horrible!" exclaimed Maud, shuddering, for she and Lilian were again looking down; but the latter, from whose face all the colour had fled, did not utter a word.

"How strange that he should have let go his hold!" said Christopher.

"What a pity!" and "How provoking!" exclaimed Walter and Jasper, together.

"Ah! now that was unfortunate, and, I must say, very awkward," said Mr Sommerfogel, quite unconcernedly.

Christopher turned on him a look of sovereign contempt, whilst muttering something about "letting him know ere long what he thought of him;" at which Maud looked much concerned and frightened. But what was to be done now? In vain the rope was swung within Mr Meadows' reach. It even touched and knocked against him. He did not attempt to lay hold of it, or show any signs of animation.

Christopher felt sure, that for him to descend now, as he had once thought of doing, would only be certain destruction, unused as he was to climbing amongst the slippery rocks, now rendered more than doubly difficult and dangerous by the uncertainty of the light, and still more so by the deceptive effect of the dark shadows which were projected from them, so completely falsifying their relative positions and distances, as to make a safe descent next to impossible for any but those not only experienced in such, but also under similar disadvantages; therefore, to attempt unaided, he knew would be madness; but it occurred to him to do so with the help of the rope to guide him; and he had just seized it with that intention, when they were all startled by hearing a crackling and crashing sound amongst the branches of the trees on the steep side of the mountain above them, and at the same instant some object appeared rapidly moving amongst them,

and soon after, a human form was seen, which, with one bound, from a great height, alighted on the pathway by their side. It was Bernard Holzhacker, carrying his clogs* in his hand, bare-footed and bare-headed. But ere they had recovered from their surprise, or had time to make any remark, throwing his clogs from his hand, and snatching the rope from Christopher's grasp, he had swung himself from the pathway, and hung suspended over the abyss; the impetus given to the rope causing it to oscillate violently for some seconds, during which Bernard more than once came rudely into contact with the sides of some of the rocks; but he kept a firm hold of the rope, and as soon as it gradually ceased swinging so violently, he endeavoured to guide it towards the ledge on which lay the inanimate form of Henry Meadows, by leaning the most of his weight in that direction; and when it approached near enough for him to do so, he put out a foot and tried to place it on the rock; but he had to make many attempts before he succeeded, which, however, he at length did, and then drew himself and the rope thereto, where he now managed to stand firmly. All that could be seen of his movements from above was, that he was bending over Mr Meadows, and a few moments of anxious suspense followed. After which the rope was again thrown into a state of oscillation, with a human form, resembling an inert mass, hanging to it over the abyss;

* These clogs, being formed merely of solid pieces of wood, only so scooped out on the upper side as just to admit the foot, are very heavy and cumbersome.

and those above supposed that it must be that of Henry Meadows still insensible, as he was no longer to be seen on the ledge of rock. Bernard had also disappeared, and they knew not what had become of him.

The men now began again, very cautiously, to pull up the rope; but, notwithstanding all their caution, they could not prevent the dead weight suspended at the end of it from causing the rope to vibrate very much; thus bringing the unconscious burden into rough contact with the rocks, sometimes on one side, and sometimes on another. Lilian could not bear to see it, but had covered her face, apparently in excessive anxiety and anguish.

Nearly about half-way of the ascent had been thus accomplished, when, at a place where was a deep and narrow cleft between two rocks, the rope swung to that side, and caused its freight to enter the crevice, where it seemed to become immovably fixed at once. In vain did the men try, by gently pulling the rope in every possible direction, to dislodge it: all to no effect!

In this horrible dilemma, the only one of the party who spoke was the garde-général. Addressing himself to the men, he expressed surprise at the disappearance of Bernard, coolly remarking that he did not think he had perished; when he was interrupted by one of them exclaiming—

"Oh! no; he's as clever as a cat in scrambling amongst the rocks by day or by night!" and then he said: "It was to be regretted that he had gone away,

as he might perhaps have greatly aided them in the present emergency."

"Now, this is what I call unfortunate," said the garde-général, with some impatience; "and allow me to tell you that I do not easily complain. No, my friends, Augustus Sommerfogel has one of the best of dispositions! But you see how late the hour is becoming. We ought to have been at home again ere this. It really is unfortunate and provoking!"

No one took any notice of this speech, so characteristic of the man; but no sooner was it ended, than they were all startled by a loud, wild, shrill cry, resembling a savage yell, peculiar to the peasantry; and Bernard bounded on to the pathway, evidently expecting to find Mr Meadows there, for he looked from one to the other, disappointed; and then quickly following with his eyes the direction of the rope, seemed at once to understand how matters stood, and, ere a word had been spoken, he commenced redescending the abyss, whilst the men ceased their efforts and awaited the result.

But the party on the pathway could now only see Bernard's receding form in a shadowy, indistinct way, and by glimpses, as some stray moonbeams lighted on him; or he was lost sight of in the shade. The moonlight was no longer so bright—often obscured by fleecy clouds, that seemed to be thickening and gathering around. And ever louder and louder appeared the roar of the immense waterfall to strike upon the ear with its awful and deafening sound.

After a period of the most painful and anxious

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

MOSSDALE—PAGE 47.

waiting—at least so it was to the young Harebells—the rope was again seen to hang in the centre of the abyss, and the men became aware that a much heavier weight was suspended to it. There was not sufficient light now to enable them to discern what it was that caused the extra weight, which Christopher and Mr Sommerfogel aided them in raising as steadily and cautiously as possible; and when it was approaching near to the level of the pathway, they perceived the inanimate form of Henry Meadows; whilst above it clung Bernard, his arms around the rope, and keeping it off from the surrounding rocks with his extended feet.

Both were safely landed on the pathway, where Mr Meadows lay motionless, and apparently lifeless. Lilian wept, and Maud also shed tears. Christopher hastened to unloose the rope from around him, whilst the garde-général, taking off his hat, told Bernard to run to the cascade and fetch some water in it, which he then dashed over Mr Meadows' inanimate countenance, who thereupon began to show some signs of returning animation, opened his eyes, and sighed heavily, but neither noticed those around him, nor seemed aware of his own position. Fortunately, the men had a bottle of the common wine of the country, of which Mr Sommerfogel managed to make him swallow a small quantity, which seemed to revive him still more from the swoon into which he had fallen; and he spoke some words, but very incoherently.

The garde-général's behaviour was now most kind

and considerate. He carefully placed poor Mr Meadows in a recumbent posture in one of the sledges; and, having ordered the men to proceed, he himself vigilantly supported him in that posture, as he walked or ran by the side of the sledge—a difficult and dangerous thing to do, besides being exceedingly troublesome and tiresome.

And thus the party was at length in motion on their homeward way! But the road had become more perilous as the uncertainty of the light had increased; and sometimes the progress of the men was rendered very slow by necessary caution.

For the last few minutes before they started, brave Bernard seemed to have been quite overlooked and forgotten in the general anxiety respecting Mr Meadows; but just as they did so, Christopher looked for him. He was nowhere to be seen. Both he and his clogs had disappeared. Whilst determining that he would take care he should not lose his so well-merited reward, Christopher felt sorry at not being able at once to give him some pecuniary recompense, so acceptable as he felt sure it would be to the poor lad.

Meanwhile Mr Sommerfogel continued unremitting in his attention to the only partially-sensible Mr Meadows, guarding and watching over him as a mother over a child, his own footing on the edge of the narrow sledge-way being often so insecure, that he not unfrequently slid off with one or both feet, and had to scramble up again, at the imminent risk of falling down some dark declivity. More than once

Christopher wished to relieve him of his charge by taking his place; but he would not listen to the proposal; and as the other felt that the invalid could not be better attended to—in fact, doubted his own capability of so well performing the duty—he did not press it. But Christopher was now a good deal puzzled in regard to the garde-général's conduct; for he could not reconcile his present behaviour with the glaring want of feeling—the utter callousness—he had previously shown. He was inclined now to regret having addressed to him such harsh and injurious language as, he thought, must of course lead to a complete estrangement, if not a quarrel; and yet, why had he shown such a provoking want of sensibility, when, as he was now proving, he was capable of feeling so differently? The fact was, that Christopher did not understand such a character at all, and knew not that, whilst Mr Sommerfogel was perfectly good-natured, he had no depth of feeling whatever; that whilst, if he saw that he could do a kindness or render a service, he would do it with pleasure; yet, that if he witnessed distress which was out of his power to alleviate, he would care very little about it, and most probably soon entirely forget it; and that he would feel as much for his friend if he were suffering from a slight headache, as if he were in the greatest anguish of body or mind, for the simple reason, that he had, in the first instance, experienced the maximum of sympathy and commiseration of which his nature was capable. And in regard to the outburst of indignation to which Christopher had given way

he knew not that Mr Sommerfogel attributed it entirely to the infirmity and random irritability of temper, which found itself vent in such injurious but almost ludicrously-inappropriate accusations, which, either at the same time or immediately afterwards, he must have been convinced were so utterly unmerited, that instead of feeling angry with him, he only now rather pitied him for the display he had made of aberration of mind and unaccountable violence of temper, of which, he doubted not, he would be heartily ashamed; and had it not been that the care of Henry Meadows required his constant and undivided attention, he would now, by engaging in friendly conversation with Christopher, have good-naturedly tried to prevent his thoughts from dwelling on—what he supposed must be to him—so humiliating a subject.

CHAPTER VIII.

"And Fancy whistled for the wind;
And if e'en Memory look'd behind,
'Twas but some friendly sight to find,
And gladsome wave her hand;
And Hope kept whispering in Youth's ear,
To spread more sail and never fear,
For the same sky would still be clear
Until they reached the land.
* * * * *
And Judgment at the helm they set,
But Judgment was a child as yet,
And, lack-a-day! was all unfit
To guide the boat aright."

The Voyage of Youth.

ON the arrival of the party at the entrance to Mossdale, they found Mr Harebell very uneasily looking out for them—who, as soon as he perceived their approach, was much alarmed at seeing poor Mr Meadows carried by two of the peasants, and hastily ran forward to meet them; when, although, without any disparagement to his kindness of heart be it said, he felt considerably

relieved on finding that it was not one of his sons who was thus brought home, which in the half-darkness he had not been assured of until close to the party; and then, without staying to ask any questions, he hastened back to the house to prepare Mrs Harebell, who stood at the door very anxiously awaiting their arrival.

The whole affair was quickly explained. Mr Meadows, who appeared to be by turns in a sort of stupor, or in nervous agitation, muttering incoherently, was gently laid on a bed; and the garde-général kindly offered to hasten to the nearest town and send a physician as quickly as possible.

But ere the doctor had arrived, Mrs Harebell insisted that Lilian and Maud, who both seemed worn out with fatigue, should retire for the night; and reluctantly they complied. The two sisters shared the same apartment; and, on entering, Lilian seated herself by a window, whilst Maud was preparing herself for retiring to rest; who at length said:

"I'm sure, Lilian, you must be very tired. Why do you remain sitting there?"

Lilian, however, made no reply; and two or three stray tears stole down her cheeks, but which, as her face was turned towards the window, her sister did not perceive, and went on to say:

"I think we may now be quite easy and satisfied. Mr Meadows will soon be properly attended to. No doubt he is only suffering from fatigue, or over-excitement, perhaps, and will soon recover, and——"

"Oh! I wish that I could feel so satisfied—that—

that—he is not—not very seriously injured!" said Lilian, her voice sounding as though it were with difficulty she kept from bursting into tears.

"I don't see why we should torment ourselves by imagining that he is so much hurt!" remarked her sister; "and, besides, Mr Sommerfogel seems to think that when——"

"I would rather be excused from hearing any opinion of Mr Sommerfogel's on the subject, Maud. I could have no faith in it. The heartlessness, the utter insensibility he showed was quite revolting when poor——oh! it provokes me too much to think of it!"

"Now, Lilian, I really wonder at you! I never saw you so unjust! Only consider how self-sacrificing, and kind, and attentive, he has been on the way home! and now he is gone in the night all the way to the town for a doctor! Oh! Lilian, you really are very unjust towards him! And although I'm very sorry for Mr Meadows, yet, I must say, that it was entirely his own fault. It was very foolish of him to place himself in such a situation (as the garde-général very justly observed), and as, no doubt, it was only done out of bravado——"

"Maud, as you value my love, say not a word more!" exclaimed Lilian, rising in anger, whilst her sister recoiled timidly from the flash of her eye. "I cannot, and will not hear you speak against him! and, only to think that you can at the same time praise that empty-headed—that cold-hearted, conceited——"

"Oh! Lilian, how shamefully ungrateful and unjust you are!"

"But there is something more that I wish to say to you on the subject of the gay garde-général, Maud, and perhaps it may as well be said now;" (Maud pretended to be busily occupied in arranging her hair, so that Lilian could not see her face), "and it is, that you receive his attentions, which, I assure you, have no significance, with too much satisfaction, and that, in fact, you are by no means indifferent to him, and I wish to warn you——"

"How ridiculous!" said Maud, with a forced laugh; "you never were more completely mistaken in your whole life!"

"Then you care nothing in particular for him?"

"Oh, dear, no! nothing whatever! Why should I? He sometimes amuses me, as he does all of us, but nothing more!" said Maud, whilst her conscience smote her for the untruth she was telling; for she had come to care a good deal for Mr Sommerfogel; had been disposed to admire him from the first time that they saw him; had construed his habitually attentive and gallant manner—latterly more particularly addressed to her, because by her more particularly well received—into personal regard for her; and those much older than Maud Harebell might, without extraordinary vanity, but unused to such manners, have deceived themselves in the same way.

"Well, I am glad to hear you say so," said Lilian, "for I really had begun to fear—but I see now that it was groundless—and I am the more glad that it is so, because I have reason to think that——"

"Pray, don't think any more about so ridiculous a

thing!" said Maud, hurriedly, fearing that she might be asked more questions, and wishing to escape from the subject; "but, Lilian,—now don't be angry,—I must say that it seems to me that you care—rather much—about Mr Meadows?"

"Certainly, I do!" replied Lilian, looking her full in the face, somewhat to Maud's confusion; "certainly I do! for he has a noble character, though not now seen to advantage; and, Maud, I will confide something to you, which is, that I have good reason to think that Mr Meadows cares—a good deal—for me," she said, bursting into tears. "And what hope is there in it? None at all! Only consider—the situation he fills here. Most probably he is quite poor. Papa and mamma would never consent—therefore I could not encourage him; indeed I have discouraged him, though I often felt very sorry for him in doing it; but never did it make me feel so unhappy, so cut me to the heart, as now! when, perhaps—perhaps—he may not recover, and will never know that I felt any regard —may, perhaps, have supposed that—that I quite disliked—that I had a *contempt* for him!" and she sobbed violently.

Maud, much moved, embraced her, and was about to say something which she meant to be consolatory —although hardly knowing what to say—when the sound of carriage wheels was heard on the road leading to the house; and, looking out, they could perceive in the moonlight that a vehicle was approaching rapidly.

"No doubt it is the doctor who is coming," said Maud.

The sisters remained for some time silent, whilst listening to any sounds that reached them from the other parts of the house, and each occupied with her own reflections. Maud could not forbear contrasting her insincerity with Lilian's frankness, and her conscience smote her for her untruthfulness, and she felt humbled and degraded in her own esteem, whilst Lilian was pondering as to how she might in the speediest way gain intelligence of the doctor's opinion of Mr Meadows' state; and yet, now that her eyes were opened—so as they never had been before—to the state of her own feelings, she shrank from the idea of putting herself forward to make the inquiries she was so earnestly desirous of obtaining, neither could she endure the thought of employing any kind of stratagem for the purpose; so, with a half-suppressed sigh, she said:

"How dreadful it will be to remain all night in this uncertainty! Oh, if I could but know the doctor's opinion at once!"

"I will go," said Maud, good-naturedly, anxious to seize upon the first opportunity that offered, for—as it seemed to her—in some measure atoning for her want of sincerity; "I will go and inquire;" and so saying, she hastily threw on a wrapping-gown, and readjusted her hair, whilst her sister remarked that she was glad Maud determined upon doing so, though she would not have asked her, as, of course, she might have done it herself. Why not? Only she had not been able quickly to decide, because—because—in fact she hardly knew why she had not already proposed herself

to adopt this course—for, indeed, she had thought of it; however, Maud must also be anxious to know the doctor's opinion regarding poor Mr Meadows, as soon as possible.

"But I see you're ready now," she said. "Oh, never mind your hair! it will do well enough; and try to know all the particulars you can—and be sure to ask——"

"I heard a door shut, perhaps the doctor is leaving already," said Maud, hastening from the apartment.

But the doctor was not going then; it was only a servant sent down stairs to fetch something that was wanted in the sick-room; so Maud waited on the staircase-landing, and began to feel very timid and uncomfortable, for she began to think that her father might be displeased at what she was doing—perhaps consider it as impertinent on her part. And in making these reflections, she soon felt a good deal flurried and confused, which feelings were much heightened and increased by an inward consciousness that, as her actions were so often tainted with some shade of artifice or dissimulation—slight though it might be—it would only be a just retribution to be now suspected of other motives for her conduct than such as she would avow. Therefore her confusion went on augmenting during the time she had to wait, which might be about ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, but appeared to her to be very much longer: and when at length Mr Harebell, accompanied by the doctor, came out of Henry Meadows' room, poor Maud was trembling with apprehension and agitation, and did

not at once find words to ask what she wanted to know.

"Why, Maud," said her father, "I thought you were in bed long ago! What are you doing here?"

"We want to know—we are anxious to hear, papa," she said, hesitating and stammering; "we should be —be—be—glad to know how—how the doctor—I mean—what he thinks of—of—Mr Meadows——"

"Oh, ho!" thought the doctor, "lies the wind in that quarter?—*we*, indeed, the sly puss! I'll be bound to say her sister cares very little about the matter, and is probably fast asleep ere this!"

"You would have done better to wait until morning to hear, instead of worrying yourself in this way, you silly girl! Poor Henry Meadows is attacked with fever and delirium, but which the doctor hopes to be able to completely conquer before long; and he has received some rather severe bruises and contusions, which will have to be properly attended to; and that is all that I can tell you now, so away with you to bed!"

And Maud, glad to escape, did not wait to have the command repeated, but hastened to her room to communicate what she had heard to her sister, who, instead of thanking her for the intelligence, did not seem by any means satisfied, and said she ought to have made more particular inquiries.

"And what a very long time you have been!" she said, "I began to think you were never coming back, and to wonder what you could be doing; and I was led to expect that you would have inquired into all the particulars, and have so much to tell me!"

"Well, Lilian, I wish you had gone yourself!" said Maud, losing patience; and — partly owing to her recent agitation and partly to vexation — began to weep.

"Forgive me, dear Maud," said Lilian, who could not bear to see her gentle sister weep, and embracing her, "forgive me, I am irritable and impatient!"

Maud soon dried her tears, and her sweet face wore again its usual smiling look, as she returned her sister's embrace; and without any more conversation they both went to rest. But late as the hour then was, and much fatigued as they were, it was long ere either of them could sleep—kept awake as each was by anxious or uneasy thoughts.

As for Maud, could her face have been seen, it would have shown that the smiling look quite forsook her countenance as soon as she found herself left to her own reflections. She was dissatisfied; wished that she had told her sister the whole truth of the matter, rather than have deceived her as she had done; and sighed, as she thought that to have done so would have required an effort, to make which, she still felt herself quite incapable, much more so now than at first, for now she would also have to confess having told an untruth. Oh! now it was out of the question, not to be thought of; but she very much wished that she had done it at once and at first! and she could not dismiss these unpleasant thoughts, nor close her eyes in slumber for a very long time,—not until, in fact, she was overpowered with utter weariness.

CHAPTER IX.

" Now Syntax and his fev'rish state
Became the subject of debate;
The mistress said she was afraid
No medicine could give him aid;
For she had heard the screech-owl scream,
And had besides a horrid dream.
Last night the candle burn'd so blue:
Forth from the fire a coffin flew;—
And, as she sleepless lay in bed,
She heard a death-watch o'er her head.
The maid and hostler, too, declar'd
That noises strange they both had heard."

The Schoolmaster's Tour.

HENRY MEADOWS was making but very slow progress towards recovery, being still very ill, and at times quite delirious; suffering, too, from various bruises and contusions, the most serious of which being on his head, sometimes probably caused or increased his tendency to delirium. He was very kindly and assiduously attended to by Mrs Harebell and the doctor, who seemed to think that he was going on satisfactorily.

" Christopher has just told me," said Maud one

day about this time, to Lilian, "that Mr Meadows, in his delirium, often mentions some one whom he calls *Laura*, and about whom he seems to be exceedingly anxious and much troubled. I wonder who she can be? You know, he never mentioned to us any one of that name; and you may remember he once told us that he has no sister. Christopher feels sure that it is some young lady to whom he is attached, which seems to me very probable; and therefore I hasten to let you know it; for it will help you to overcome—what you already considered as *hopeless* —your—your caring for him, in short, too much for your own peace,—and you must have been mistaken, you see, in supposing that he——"

"Thank you for telling me," said Lilian, composedly, but looking very pale; "thank you; but I perfectly understand. It is unnecessary to say more about it. It is not of the importance to me that you seem to think. Oh, dear, no!" she said, with a slight toss of her graceful head. "I shall, of course, have no difficulty whatever in overcoming—what—what only arose from—from—a *mistake*—I suppose I ought to say."

But she could not think it a mere mistake; for, although Mr Meadows had not spoken quite openly, yet he had in so many ways behaved in such a manner as to naturally lead her to infer that he was so very far from feeling indifferent to her!

"Well, I'm glad to think that it is of no consequence to you," said Maud; "for I was rather afraid——"

"Oh! you don't understand me, Maud, or you would not have been at all afraid!" and so saying, Lilian, with calm dignity, left the room.

Maud was puzzled, and thought that truly she did not understand her sister; but felt glad to find her, as she supposed, so perfectly indifferent.

The doctor was now more than ever confirmed in the opinion that Maud took especial interest in his patient. As Lilian kept as much as possible out of the way, Maud was the one of the two sisters whom he the most frequently encountered,—on which occasions she could hardly have done otherwise than make some inquiries after the invalid.

Things were in this state, when one day that Lilian happened to be alone in the drawing-room, the garde-général came to call. For a few moments—a rather unusual case with him—he was silent, seemingly engrossed with his own thoughts; and then—a still more unusual case with him—he really did seem somewhat embarrassed, and at a loss how to begin something that he evidently wished to say. At length, having coughed and cleared his throat several times, he said:

"There is something, my dear young lady, that I much wish to confide to you. I am frankness itself! and how can I bear to have a secret, and not tell any one here? Besides, I am sure you are discreet, and will not divulge it to any one else; therefore——"

"But were it not better that you do not tell it to me?" said Lilian. "And, indeed, I don't like having secrets to keep, and would much prefer that you don't tell me."

"Oh! but I cannot bear to keep it to myself any longer—indeed, I cannot! and I don't know any one to whom I may more safely confide it than to you. And, moreover, I want you to congratulate me on my good fortune; for it is, that I am engaged to my charming Paulina!"

"Receive my congratulations, then," said Lilian, smiling.

"Oh! when you will have become acquainted with Paulina!—my angelic Paulina—you will then be able to form some idea of my felicity!" he said, becoming quite at his ease.

Lilian only replied by smilingly saying "she hoped some time to have that pleasure;" whilst she was rejoicing to think that her surmise in regard to Maud's preference for the garde-général had proved groundless; and he went on to say:

"For you will find that adorable Paulina is not only all-charming, but that she has also a noble mind. Oh! a wonderful mind! I forget myself, however, in talking on such a theme—and no wonder! But I must hasten to most earnestly entreat you not to mention my engagement to any one. I beg you will not name it yet to any one, not even to any member of your own family. I have my reasons, which I will explain to you; and it would make me very uneasy if——"

"Oh! you may be quite easy on the subject," said Lilian, again smiling at his anxiety to persuade her in a matter that was not of the slightest importance either to herself or her relatives.

"Thank you—thank you very much! How kindly considerate you are! I think you have some striking resemblance in character to my Paulina. But I must hasten my explanation before any interruption occurs. You must know that Mademoiselle Boursasque (my Paulina) has very little fortune; but she has an aunt —Madame Fantasque—who has brought her up, and is wealthy, and will give her a handsome dower if she does not marry contrary to her wishes; and she has very peculiar notions, has Madame Fantasque,—is excessively particular, and, it seems, has set her mind upon herself choosing a husband for her niece. She has been staying some time in Italy, but is expected home again very shortly. Now, you understand, that if on her return she were to hear that Paulina had engaged herself, without even so much as consulting her, and to some one who, instead of being her selection, was unknown to her—for although I have often heard of her, she is unacquainted with me—what might not her anger and displeasure be? And the consequences—I dare not think of them! Therefore, you see that our only safe course is to keep the affair secret until I shall have been presented to Madame Fantasque; and then—oh, then!—I think I may without vanity say, Augustus Sommerfogel, trust to yourself for making a favourable impression! But I hear some one approaching. You promise me that you will not mention what I have said?"

"Yes, yes," replied Lilian, "I promise you." Which she had barely done, when little Bertha entered the apartment, and was soon after followed by her mother.

Now, Bertha being somewhat in advance, and possessed of as quick ears as most children, had overheard Mr Sommerfogel's request to her sister, not to mention what he had told her, and her consequent promise, and with childish curiosity she determined, if possible, to penetrate the secret. She felt sure, however, that as Lilian had promised not to tell, it would be useless to ask her, and was revolving in her mind what measures to take to discover it, when her mother sent her with a message to Maud.

Meanwhile, the garde-général, on finding that Mr Harebell and Christopher were busily engaged at the factory—after having obtained information as to how Mr Meadows was progressing—took leave; but in so doing, he made a very significant sign to Lilian, which she seemed to well understand, and answered by a nod of intelligence; and both the one and the other had been noticed by Mrs Harebell, with some surprise; who, as soon as Mr Sommerfogel was gone, with a somewhat grave air, said:

"I have been used to find you very frank, Lilian; I hope you will continue to be so. You must be well aware that you cannot have a safer or truer friend than your mother."

Lilian immediately forgot all about the garde-général and his confidences, to think only of Henry Meadows, and that her mother must by some means have divined her sentiments towards him, and her colour went and came, as, with averted looks, she remained silent.

After regarding her for a few moments, Mrs Harebell rather sadly said:

"I don't wish to force myself into your confidence, Lilian; but if you voluntarily trusted me, I'm sure it would be to your advantage."

Now, had she not heard anything about *Laura*, Lilian would have frankly avowed the state of her feelings to her mother; but since she had spoken of them to her sister, she had heard of Laura, and now Christopher, the doctor, and, in fact, the whole family, had very decidedly adopted the same view of the case as had Maud; for, in his delirium, Henry Meadows was continually and passionately calling upon this Laura—had many times supposed that Mrs Harebell, or a servant entering the room, was that person, and apostrophized her as such—supplicating her, with the utmost earnestness, not to leave him until he had explained something—which, however, he did not explain, for his mind invariably wandered off into mere incoherent ravings; and both Mr and Mrs Harebell did not conceal their opinion that the evident weight with which his mind had so long seemed oppressed, proceeded from this—as they supposed—unfortunate attachment. Therefore Lilian could not now, for one moment, think of acknowledging her own wounded feelings—she was much too proud—thought she would rather die than avow anything so humiliating—regretted that she had ever spoken on the subject to Maud—would not acknowledge, even to herself, how deeply she felt the smart of wounded affection, but persuaded herself—or at least tried to do so—that it was the mere effect of anger and indignation at having allowed herself to be so imposed upon. She remained

perfectly silent, unable to bring herself to utter a word; and her mother—who had latterly observed, with concern, that she had lost a great part of her accustomed vivacity, and was not seeming as happy as formerly—looked at her anxiously for a few moments; and then, with sorrow and displeasure in her countenance, quitted the apartment. As soon as she was gone, Lilian hid her face in her hands, and burst into tears.

Meanwhile, Bertha had sought out Maud, and after delivering the message with which she had been charged, said:

"Only think, Mr Sommerfogel has been telling a secret to Lilian. I'm sure it must be about something very interesting, or he would not have seemed to think it so very important, and he has made her promise not to tell. I wonder what it can be about! Don't you? Can you at all guess?"

Maud at once thought she could form a tolerably correct idea as to the subject of the secret, for, it occurred to her, that it was no other than the garde-général avowing to her sister, under the charge of secrecy his attachment to herself; therefore, slightly colouring, she looked pleased, but, with assumed indifference said:

"Oh! no; I cannot guess! How should I know anything about it?"

"Well, I intend to ask Mr Sommerfogel to tell it to me," said Bertha; "and I'll ask him just to let me tell it to you; because, I am sure, now that I've spoken to you about it, you must wish to know it too."

"No, I don't wish to hear it from you, Bertha," said

Maud, trying to look grave and displeased, but more inclined to laugh; "it would be very impertinent and improper in you to ask anything about what he may not wish to tell you."

"Well, you have no need to be so cross about it!" said Bertha, disappointedly leaving the room.

CHAPTER X.

" How grand, how awful, is the scene
Where stately mountains rise,
Whose cloud-capp'd summits stretch aloft,
And seem to touch the skies!—
While scatter'd on their craggy sides,
The verdant pasture grows;
And at their feet, in chasm deep,
The foaming torrent flows!"

The Cambrian Cot.

" Musing on this world's commotion,
And the change of earthly things,
Many a false and airy notion
Plumes my erring Fancy's wings.

Sometimes weary of its bustle,
I have wish'd same calm retreat,
Where no sounds, save winds that rustle
Through the leaves, my ear could meet—

Save the streamlet, as it bubbled
Lightly o'er the pebbles clear;
Or, by little juttings troubled,
Eddying murmur'd on the ear.

* * * *

Whither will these whimsies lead thee,
Thy unyoked ideas run?
Mortal! these will little speed thee
Onward, if the prize be won.

Happiness her goal has planted
At the end of Duty's race;
And to those her prize is granted
Who the course attentive trace."

E. W. G.

IT so happened that Christopher and the garde-général did not meet until some time had elapsed since the unfortunate mountain excursion; and when at length they did so, the latter advanced towards the former, with all his accustomed lively, good-humoured, and demonstrative manner—in which not a shade of coolness was perceptible—whilst the other showed very evident and rather awkward marks of embarrassment. And although Mr Sommerfogel, with his usual fluency, began to talk, first on one subject, and then on another, yet, finding that Christopher remained uninterested, and seemed absent and ill at ease, he soon said:

"I see, my friend, your thoughts are engrossed—no doubt you are occupied. I fear I am interrupting you—I will wish you a good morning now, and not detain you ——"

"Oh! no—don't go," said the other, "you don't interrupt me at all. I'm not particularly engaged, and indeed, I wish to speak with you. I ought to explain. I owe you an apology. I hope you will believe me when I assure you that—that I am very sorry—for—

for having addressed such intemperate language to you. I am truly sorry that I did so. I did not know that you——"

"Why, my dear friend!" exclaimed the garde-général, in unfeigned astonishment, "what *do* you mean?"

Christopher looked as much astonished on his part to find that the circumstances had made so little impression on the other, and did not reply.

Mr Sommerfogel seemed to consider a moment or two, and then said, "Ah! I know now what you allude to. Oh! my friend, you little know Augustus Sommerfogel, if you suppose him one to harbour a grudge on account of a little spurt of temper! No, no! my friend, I have a better disposition than *that*, I am happy to say! and, besides, I knew that you could not really mean what you said. You were not yourself at the time, and, therefore, it had no more effect upon me than what any one (excuse me) in the delirium of fever might say. I assure you it was not of any importance, and you have my hearty forgiveness, and now don't think any more about what is evidently very disagreeable to you."

Christopher grasped him warmly by the hand, and gave it a hearty shake, for he now fell into the opposite extreme in his opinion of him, thinking him as much more noble-minded and generous, and, in fact, as much better as he formerly thought him worse than in truth he was; and he felt too much affected by the supposed magnanimity of his conduct to be inclined to express his thoughts in words; and, after a pause

of a few moments, Mr Sommerfogel went on to say, "But if you really are not particularly engaged at present, and can give me your company a little longer, there is something—something very agreeable—that I would communicate to you *in confidence*, and which very nearly concerns myself and my happiness. If, however, I should now be detaining you too long——"

"Oh, not at all!" exclaimed Christopher, glad of the opportunity of showing him attention. "I am quite at liberty, and shall be happy to hear anything you may be inclined to confide to me."

Whereupon, the other, not without the strictest recommendations to secrecy, related to him all the particulars that he had previously communicated to Lilian, and almost in the same words, of his engagement to the charming Paulina, and in like manner exacted a promise from him to keep the matter perfectly secret for the present, which, of course, Christopher, without hesitation, also promised to do, and they separated, mutually well pleased.

Christopher was then on his way to Bernard Holzhacker's, who had been liberally rewarded by the Harebells for his gallant conduct in rescuing Henry Meadows, and who had latterly remained away from his work at the factory. He found the dwelling of the Holzhackers in precisely the same state as when he was first there, not in any respect more cleanly or comfortable looking, nor showing in any less degree the sad signs of squalid poverty, which rather surprised him to see, although he had by this time become

pretty well acquainted with the untidy habits of the people, for the income of the family had been very much increased since his first visit to the cottage, by three of its members being employed in the factory; therefore he was both surprised and displeased. The father of the family, as before, was cowering in a corner by the side of the stone, apparently quite weak, spiritless, and without energy, owing for the most part to the want of a sufficient and proper supply of food. The sickly-looking mother was just as badly clothed, and was in some sort occupied in idly, slowly, and listlessly winding some cotton yarn from a hand-reel (a most unremunerative employment), and with her foot sometimes rocking the cradle, in which, as usual, lay the large-headed child. Two ragged children, the elder of whom was old enough to have been learning some useful employment, were playing with bits of broken earthenware on the floor, all in the dirt and dust; whilst another, still older—a ragged boy who had been idly amusing himself outside—followed Christopher into the house, and stood staring at him whilst he remained. Bernard was not at home, having gone into the forest to fetch wood, and in answer to the inquiries as to why he had not come to his work, both parents for a few seconds remained silent, and then the father, in his feeble voice, said, "Two of our children work at the factory. I think that's enough. They are always away, and can't fetch wood nor do anything else for us, and I don't see what better I am for their wages, for I see precious little of the money—they spend it as they please!"

"Now, out upon you!" said his wife; "you know that you were drinking all day last Monday with the money you got from them, and have been ill the whole week after!"

"Oh! it's fine talking," replied the old man, quite unmoved at the accusation, to which probably he was too well used; "it's fine talking for you, to be sure, when all the money that you can lay hold of you spend in making feasts for yourself and the younger children, instead of buying something useful with it! And I'll just tell you, Master Harebell, that when the girls get any money, they spend it in finery for a Sunday, and when the bigger lads get any, they spend it in playing at bowls; so I don't see why I am always to be grumbled at when——"

"Well, well," said Christopher, interrupting him, understanding now how it was that he did not find any improvement either in the dwelling or its inmates; disgusted at what he heard, and impatient to put a stop to it—"I am come to tell you that you must let Bernard come to his work. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves to keep him at home, so much against his interest! You know very well that the two eldest of the children that I see here are quite old enough to fetch firewood for you, and do any other odd jobs you require."

"Ah! holy Mary!" exclaimed the woman, "they are only children; they don't know how to do anything!"

"And they are so bad and unmanageable," said the father.

"Then why don't you teach them better?" said Christopher, losing all his patience. "But I'll tell you what, if you will not let Bernard come to his work immediately—to-morrow—and remain at it in future undisturbed, why, then, we will turn off your other son and your daughter too. You may keep them all at home! and so, good-morning." Saying which, he did not wait to hear more, but left the house.

Now, Christopher had somewhat overstepped his authority, led on by impatience, in threatening to send away Holzhacker's other children employed at the factory; and as he walked home, and his anger and indignation cooled down, he regretted having said it; but he was exceedingly anxious, if possible, to take poor Bernard, for whom he had conceived a liking, and who had proved himself to be intelligent and well-disposed, and, as he thought, had shown himself "capable of better things," out of the melancholy slough of ignorance, idleness, poverty, and moral debasement in which his parents so stupidly and obstinately wished to keep him enthralled. He felt, besides, perfectly convinced that the younger children were quite capable of rendering them all the required assistance, and that to train them to do so, would be incomparably better and happier for the children themselves, than, as now, allowing them to acquire such idle habits, as in some natures would prove inexterminable. And, be it remarked, that the Harebells had found such-like idle children, whose misfortune it was to have no regular employment, a very great nuisance in the neighbourhood, per-

petually doing some damage, or getting into some mischief.*

The following morning, Bernard Holzhacker appeared at his work in the factory, and looked pleased and happy at finding himself there; but his clothing was much the worse for his late occupations—which Christopher observing, made him a present of a cast-off suit of his own, with which he seemed highly delighted.

* None but those who have for many years resided in the midst of this peasantry can form an adequate idea of—with some few exceptions—their profound ignorance, gross superstition, and deplorable moral degradation. The Government has instituted schools in the villages, and much pains in many cases are taken to persuade or compel the parents to send their children. And perhaps ere very long they may improve; for which there is great room.

CHAPTER XI.

"But," added the Eagle, "pray, how shall I know
Your young? for I never did meet them.
And 'twould be to our friendship a terrible blow
Should I chance to discover and eat them."

"Then list," said the Owl, "while my young I describe
(With many a fond interjection),
You'll find in my offspring a beautiful tribe,
The model of matchless perfection!"

The Eagle and the Owl.

IN Strasburg, that ancient city, with its military sentinels, ponderous drawbridges, massive fortifications, high houses, noisy population, and beautiful cathedral,—in one of the busy streets, stands a tall, quaintly old-fashioned-looking house, a type of many others, with pointed gable-ends, and very high sloping roof, furnished with two rows of leaden-cased attic windows, now mostly all wide open, giving a very "staring wide-awake look," to the upper part of the building. This is Madame Fantasque's habitation. And on the first storey—below which are only offices—is a sitting-

room looking towards the street; and in it is a lady of apparently about nine-and-twenty or thirty. She is a very large person, being both tall and stout, with shining black hair, and a very dark skin; features, not ill-formed, but exceedingly coarse and masculine, especially her mouth, which, though graced with fine teeth, is very wide, and strongly marked with decision; steady, determined, grey eyes; and altogether a remarkably resolute countenance. This is Mademoiselle Bourasque, niece to Madame Fantasque, Mr Sommerfogel's charming Paulina, and three or four years his senior. Her morning toilette—the hour was in the forenoon—consisted of a very much soiled, and somewhat torn, loose silk wrapper, whose colours may at one time have been brilliant, but which seemed to have long ere this departed, "leaving only their shadows behind;" her hair was negligently rolled up in such a way as to lead one to suppose that it had been undisturbed since its possessor retired to rest on the previous evening; no snow-white muslin relieved the dusky hue of her skin, but a dark-coloured old silk handkerchief was twisted around her throat; and to complete her costume, her feet were thrust into a pair of gaudily-worked slippers, the toes of which were nearly as wide open as the attic windows of the house.

A parrot was on a perch in one corner of the room, and a dog lay on a mat by the door.

As the weather was warm, the large French windows were thrown open; and a very great noise and din rose up from the street below—the passing of a

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variety of vehicles, which not unfrequently came into rather inconvenient contact, owing to the street being somewhat narrow for the traffic, the shouting and vociferations of the drivers and the loud cracking of their long whips, the barking of dogs, the cries of hawkers of fish and other provisions, a continual and confused hum of human voices, and predominating over all the ringing of a whole peal of bells at a neighbouring church, and a band of military music playing at no great distance. But this Babel-like medley of sounds did not seem in the least to disturb or distract Paulina, who continued her occupation of working at an embroidery-frame, until the ringing of a bell at the house-door below was heard; when, starting up from her seat—letting her embroidery-frame fall on the floor, and all the balls of wool roll about, causing the dog to jump up and bark violently—and looking out of the window, she exclaimed:

"Ah! it's the postman. I did not think it was his time yet. Now, how that lazy Babette keeps him waiting!"

But as no Babette appeared, and the man rang a second time, she lost all patience; and, muttering "Idle dawdle!" kicked the footstool out of her way, which slid along the polished oak floor to a considerable distance, then kicked the dog from the mat, who also slid along until he could steady himself on his feet,—this ready way of removing obstacles may account for the state of the toes of her slippers,—Mademoiselle Bourasque ran down stairs, and herself received two letters from the postman.

As she remounted the stairs and looked at the directions—"Ah! one is from aunty and the other from Gus," she said to herself; and, returning to the room, and kicking the footstool back to its place, she again took the chair she had left. "Now, was there ever such a blundering creature as dear Gus? I never saw such a stupid man!" she exclaimed, adding, "though he is a darling! He has read my letter all wrong!" and seemingly forgetting that she was alone, or taking the parrot, who had commenced jabbering, for her audience, she continued: "We had decided that he should not come until aunty had been at home some days, so that I might have had time to prepare her to see him: and I wrote him that I did not expect her to return until in a week from now, and the simpleton has read it that she has been at home a week now! I'm sure I wrote it plainly enough; and though the letter did fall on the floor before the ink was dry, and Sibeaux put his paw on it, what of that? It was still legible enough; and what if you did take hold of it with your beak, Poll, you naughty bird! and crumpled it a bit, before I could get it from you, that did not make much difference! Oh, Poll! Poll! isn't this darling of mine a stupid man?"

She then opened the other letter, and after reading a few lines, exclaimed: "Well, to be sure! she will be here this evening! Gus and aunt both coming this evening! was there ever anything so awkward and unfortunate?" And again kicking the footstool out of her way, she rang the bell violently, and, after waiting a few moments, was commencing a second

peal, when the room door was slowly opened, and an exceedingly fat, apathetic-looking maid appeared.

"Babette, my aunt is coming home this evening," said Paulina. "It is very provoking of her not letting me know sooner; and at other times she will keep people expecting her for ever so long before she comes! But as I was saying, Babette, she is coming this evening; and you know that her room is not prepared, nor her things put in order, nor anything in the house for supper"—in regard to the supper, she thought also of Mr Sommerfogel, but did not think fit to mention him to the maid;—"and you know how exceedingly particular my aunt is about everything! Well, why do you stand there without bestirring yourself, as if you were the new bridge, and could not move?"

"Very well, Mademoiselle," said Babette.

"Very well, indeed! you dolt, it is not very well! But pack yourself off, and prepare the rooms—do you hear?—whilst I go out to buy what is wanted."

"As you please, Mademoiselle," replied phlegmatic Babette, with a half-suppressed yawn, as she turned very slowly, "like a door on its hinges, or a sluggard in his bed," and moved away at a very moderate pace, with a soft, heavy, elephant-like tread, that made the oaken floor bend and creak under each foot-fall; and gently as she walked, still her fat pale cheeks shook visibly; whilst Paulina, brushing past her, had ascended another flight of stairs to her own room, ere the maid had fairly closed the sitting-room door behind her.

Throwing off her morning wrapper so roughly as to

add to some of its flaws very considerably, and pulling on a dress with so little precaution as to damage it also; kicking off her slippers, and shoving on her feet a pair of nearly worn-out boots; casting a rumpled old silk mantilla over her shoulders; pushing her hair from her face, and donning a smart faded hat, with a long broken feather; and thrusting her hands into a pair of gloves, so much the worse for wear and in need of reparation, that several of her finger ends were uncovered,—Mademoiselle Bourasque's toilette was completed, and she sallied forth into the street.

Strasburg, not being distant from Mossdale more than about fifty miles, and a railroad running within a few miles of the whole length, the Harebell family occasionally went there to make various purchases; and it so happened that Lilian and Christopher were there this morning for that purpose, and were in the first shop into which Paulina entered, who brushed rudely past Christopher, and impertinently placed herself before Lilian, so as to come between her and the shopman, who was just then showing her some wares, and abruptly demanded of him what she wanted.

"In a moment, Mademoiselle Bourasque; pray, take a seat," said the man; "I will attend to you presently."

Thus repulsed, she unwillingly seated herself, and in doing so, clumsily knocked down a pile of goods from the counter, which the shopman politely replaced. She neither assisted him, nor condescended to make an apology. On hearing her name, both Christopher and Lilian looked at her attentively.

For a few moments Paulina sat drumming impatiently on the counter with her gloveless finger ends, and then said: "But I am in haste; very likely that young person (Lilian was plainly dressed in travelling costume) can very well wait awhile; therefore I expect you will serve me now, or I will leave the shop."

Lilian reddened and looked annoyed, but did not say anything, and the shopman seemed about to leave her and attend to the other, when Christopher, looking at his watch, interposed, and protested against his sister's being put off, telling the man that they must hasten in order not to miss the train, whereupon he bowed, and continued his attention to Lilian. And the charming Paulina, muttering something about "the consequences of coming into contact with ill-bred people," rose in fury from the chair on which she was seated, throwing it violently down as she did so, and, leaving it lying there, she flung out of the shop, saying that she would "go elsewhere for what she wanted, and regretted having come there at all!" Meanwhile, the shopman only smiled, and seemed to treat the matter with perfect indifference, and as if quite used to such behaviour from Mademoiselle Bourasque.

Having, soon after, completed her purchases, Lilian, accompanied by her brother, also left the shop, and, on the way to the station, said,—"What a remarkably rude, disagreeable, and coarse woman, that Mademoiselle Bourasque seems to be!"

"Oh! a regular dragoon!" said Christopher, and quite repulsively plain and coarse!"

"But it is odd, I cannot help smiling at the idea,"

remarked Lilian, as she smiled faintly (she had not seemed at all light-hearted for some time, and seldom laughed or even smiled), "her name caused me to think of some one who must be so very different from her! but about whom I am not at liberty to tell you or any one at present, that really the association of ideas is exceedingly droll!" and she again smiled a languid smile.

"Well, that's comical!" said Christopher, "for the name caused me, too, to think of some one that I am not at liberty to tell you or any one else anything about at present! Most probably we have both been let into the same secret. A good joke, that!" he said, laughing.

"Perhaps it is so, but I have solemnly promised not to divulge mine," said Lilian.

"Why, that is just what I've done too! So it's clear that for the present we can come to no explanation; but as to the idea that the person to whom I allude can have anything in common with that coarse virago, the mere supposition is outrageous, and perfectly absurd!" and Christopher laughed heartily. Lilian tried also to laugh, but failed.

CHAPTER XII.

"Ye courtesies of life, all hail!
Whether along the peaceful vale,
Where the thatch'd cot alone is seen,
The humble mansion of the green,
Or in the city's crowded way,
Man, mortal man, is doom'd to stray;
You give to joy an added charm,
And woe of half its pangs disarm.
How much in every state he owes
To what kind courtesy bestows—
* * * *
To every act it gives a grace;
It adds a smile to every face;
And Goodness' self we better see
When dress'd by gentle Courtesy."

ANONYMOUS.

AND now it was evening. Neither Madame Fantasque nor Mr Sommerfogel had yet arrived at her house in Strasburg, where Mademoiselle Bourasque, in evening toilette, was again seated in the *salon*, her exuberant black hair being twisted into a graceful plait at the back of her head, whilst at the front it was disposed in glossy braids;

brilliant gold pendants hanging to her ears; a tastily-made and long-flowing gauzy looking dress, which added softness to her figure; her complexion somewhat relieved by the white lace around her throat, fastened by a sparkling brooch; handsome bracelets on her arms, which, though not white, were round and well-formed, and glittering rings on her fingers, now again employed at the embroidery frame,—she really did not present at all an unpleasing picture, but quite the reverse, as the soft light of a large lamp, the globe of which was covered by a shade of rose-coloured tissue-paper, was projected upon her. But her busy fingers moved nervously, and by such jerks, at her work, that she several times broke the wool, and she seemed quite engrossed by her thoughts, stopping to listen to every noise, and often looking at a French clock that stood on a marble bracket by her side. At length the sound of the front-door bell made her start, and throwing down her work, she rose from her seat and stood listening for a few moments, when, not hearing Babette's heavy tread, her face became red with passion, and, stamping on the floor, she muttered betwixt her teeth—"The idiot! Oh! the stupid idle!" but she stopped, for she did now hear the ponderous "velvet-paw" steps descending the stairs, and listened more intently. Mademoiselle Bourasque would have descended herself to open the door, when she found that Babette did not immediately do so, had she thought that Madame Fantasque had arrived; but not having heard the approach of carriage-wheels, she knew that it could not be her, but most probably was

Mr Sommerfogel, and to descend to open the door for him seemed inconsistent with what she considered as her dignity, the maintaining of which she thought a good deal of, notwithstanding that she was in the habit of so much demeaning herself by the unseemly outbursts of violence to which she gave way!

It proved to be the garde-général who had rung at the door; and on hearing his steps mounting the stairs, she quickly reseated herself, and resumed her embroidery.

"My charmer! how are you?" exclaimed Mr Sommerfogel, theatrically rushing forward, with one hand pressed to his heart, whilst the other was extended to grasp hers.

"Now, don't make a fool of yourself, Gus!" she said, sharply, but really looking well pleased. "I'm sorry you're come;" and after explaining the case, "How could you make such a mistake?"

"The writing was not very distinct," timidly observed the other.

"Not distinct! What do you mean by such impertinence? to say that my writing was not distinct! You must be as blind as a beetle!" she cried, trembling with passion.

"Be calm—be calm—my all-charming! Of course, your writing is beautiful—as is everything else you do—and as you are yourself; but there seemed to have been some accident with that letter; it was a little—just a little—blotted, which prevented the writing from being—now, be calm, my enchantress—from being quite so legible as it ——"

"Well—well!" she said, somewhat appeased, and impatiently interrupting him, "where's the use of going on droning in that way! You're a goose, Gus, and that's the long and the short of the matter. My aunt may arrive at any minute, and by your blundering you have frustrated all the precautions that I intended to take!"

At that instant the sound of carriage wheels was heard, and a ring at the door-bell.

"Ah! here is my aunt!" exclaimed Paulina; "I must run and open the door for her—Babette is so slow—and she cannot bear to be kept waiting!" and hastened from the apartment, leaving the garde-général feeling himself to be in rather an awkward position. But he looked at the reflection he saw of himself in a pier-glass, ran his fingers through his hair, pulled up his collar, arranged his gold chain so as to hang in the most graceful manner, turned the rings on his fingers so as to show the gems to the most advantage; and having had time to complete all these little arrangements, felt his self-confidence wonderfully restored. But he would have had ample time to recommence and conclude all these embellishments two or three times over, so long was he left to his own meditations.

There was a lengthy dispute with the driver of the fiacre, Madame Fantasque calmly, and Paulina scoldingly, refusing to pay the sum he demanded, and which he insisted upon being entitled to, owing to the great quantity of luggage. At length, the affair was settled by the man being paid what he asked. And then all the numerous parcels and packages had to be carried

up stairs; and Paulina would willingly, and in order to expedite the business, have assisted the slow maid, but her aunt would not allow it.

"No, my angel," she said, "it is not fit for you to do—I could not think of permitting it; but you can stay here with me until we have seen them all carried up."

And so, thinking all the time that the supper would be spoiling, and internally fretting and fuming, but not saying anything—as she knew, that when once decided, her aunt would be sure to carry her point—she remained until the last of the packages had been carried up; Madame Fantasque being determined herself to see it done, which, when at length really and truly completed, and nothing left behind, Paulina called to mind that she ought to say something in explanation of Mr Sommerfogel's presence in the *salon*, and hurried it over as quickly as possible whilst they were mounting the stairs.

"Oh, indeed! the garde-général for the valley of Mossdale—come to call. Oh! very well," said Madame Fantasque. "I hope Babette has the supper ready, for I'm much in want of it."

"Ready! why it was ready more than an hour ago! I hope it may not be quite spoiled," said Paulina.

They entered the sitting-room, and Mr Sommerfogel was introduced to a thin old lady, in appearance and manners a perfect contrast to her niece. She stooped in her gait, her eyes were wandering and unsteady, her voice was tremulous, and her enunciation hesitating and undecided. After a few words of

politeness had been interchanged—when the lady of the house said she was charmed to see him there—but really hardly looked at him, Babette came to say that supper was served. Madame Fantasque at once led the way into the dining-room, which was adjoining, seemingly quite forgetful of the poor garde-général, who, very much discomfited and disappointed, now rose from his chair, and reluctantly said that he would wish the ladies a "Good evening."*

"Good evening, sir; good evening. Happy to have made your acquaintance," said Madame Fantasque, with perfect indifference. But Paulina hastened to whisper in her ear:

"Oh! aunt, will you let him leave now, when he knows that we are just going to supper? Only think how inhospitable—how rude ——"

"Oh! ah! to be sure!—but I don't see the necessity ——" she was beginning to reply, in the same low tone; but the other, with a look of anger, interrupted her, by saying aloud:

"Mr Sommerfogel, my aunt hopes you will stay and take supper with us?"

"Now, Paulina, my angel, how you take the words out of my mouth! Well, of course, sir—of course, that is what I intended to say—and if you will take things just as we have them—and without ceremony ——"

* It is usual in Strasburg to sup earlier than is customary in England, there not being in general any regular meal taken (excepting by children and invalids) that corresponds to the English *tea*.

"You see that the garde-général has accepted, aunt, so now let's go into the dining-room. I'm sure the supper must be growing cold."

"What an impatient spirit you have, my angel! It is a bad thing. Pity it is that you cannot be calm as you see me? Oh! but I'm not ready, for I now remember that I have to change my dress," said Madame Fantasque. "The supper had best be carried back to the kitchen, and kept warm."

"Now, how tiresome of you, aunt! Why did you not change your dress sooner?" exclaimed Paulina, in very ill-humour, which she was at no pains to hide.

"Oh, that temper! that temper of yours, my angel! what have I not to bear from it! Fortunately I am resigned to it. Ring for Babette."

Paulina, frowningly, did so; the maid was some time in answering the bell, and then began slowly removing the dishes.

"How dreadfully slow Babette is! I think, my angel, she grows worse and worse!" said Madame Fantasque; and, apologising to Mr Sommerfogel, and accompanied by Paulina—who went to assist, and, if possible, expedite her aunt's movements, and who felt too much exasperated to make any further remark—quitted the apartment; and the garde-général was again left to his own reflections. He wished he had not come there just on that particular evening; Madame Fantasque was so much engrossed with her own arrangements, he thought, that he had but little chance of gaining much of her attention, and so making a favourable impression. However, he might

have a better opportunity by and by. Paulina, at least, evidently wished him to stay for supper, and he would remain, and see what he could do later in the way of making himself agreeable.

After about half-an-hour had elapsed, the two ladies returned to the dining-room, and poor Babette, now looking really tired, was again summoned, and again served up the supper.

As soon as they were seated at table, Mr Sommerfogel made some attempts at general conversation, but they were unsuccessful, for Madame Fantasque still remained quite engrossed with herself and her own concerns.

"How very hard and dry these cutlets are," she remarked.

"They are dried up with having been kept waiting so long," replied her niece.

"Well, Babette," she said to the maid, "I should like you to go at once, and prepare some fresh ones."

"As you please, Madame," replied Babette, in a sleepy voice.

"Oh, aunt! only consider how late it is!" remonstrated Paulina. "Let me give you some of this chicken instead. I'm sure it's very nice and tender."

"No, my darling; I don't feel much inclined for chicken, but I think I should like some fresh cutlets. Make haste, Babette, and get them done as quickly as you can—I begin to feel tired."

Paulina offered no further remonstrance; for she knew by experience, that when Madame Fantasque

had determined to have a thing, however inconvenient to others it might be, it was no use arguing the matter with her. As well might one try to charm a deaf adder; for that, if possible, have it she would. Although not at all decided in manner, as was her niece, yet she was much more pertinaciously determined to obtain whatever she happened to set her mind upon. She went to work like the continual dropping of water; and when you might perhaps imagine that you had induced her to change her purpose, you would very probably find that you had had no more effect upon her, than has a passing breeze upon a lithe willow,—which, though it bends and seems to assume another posture under its influence, rises into exactly the same position again immediately afterwards.

As soon as Babette had left the room to prepare the fresh cutlets, and was at too great a distance to hear, Madame Fantasque called after her, without however, raising her voice above its usual pitch; and, of course, received no answer.

"What is it that you want, aunt?" inquired Paulina.

"I only wish to tell Babette to bring some pickle," she said, "and some other wine—and I see she has forgotten the pepper; but as she is so stupid as not to come, you had better ring the bell, darling."

Paulina did so; and then, to help to pass the time for Mr Sommerfogel, commenced showing him a portfolio of engravings.

When Babette again made her appearance, Madame Fantasque, instead of at once telling her of the three

things required, only named the pickle; and, when she was again out of hearing, called to her, and again had the bell to be rung, when she mentioned the wine; whilst the pepper was forgotten until the fresh cutlets were brought, and then Babette was sent down stairs again to fetch it! Such was this lady's usual mode of proceeding. And what with Madame Fantasque's intense selfishness and exactions, and her niece's harshness and violence—by far, however, the more supportable of the two—it is not to be wondered at, that no maid more clever or efficient than phlegmatic Babette, would remain with them.

In vain Mr Sommerfogel made efforts to be agreeable; his spirits were damped by continual inattention, and it seemed to him that he utterly failed, which made him feel more spiritless, and still less likely in his own opinion to succeed.

"Now, aunt," said Paulina, in a pause of Madame Fantasque's frivolous chatter about herself, and speaking in as low a tone as her coarse, masculine voice would well permit, "now, aunt, if you take those strawberries at night——"

"Oh! my darling, I know best—you need not be uneasy," and so saying, she helped herself to all the finest on the dish; and her niece well knew that the probable consequence would be her indisposition on the following day; the inevitable result of which would be that neither the maid nor herself would have a moment's peace—but, with an air of annoyance, she shrugged her shoulders and said no more, as she saw it would be useless.

At length, and at a late hour, the supper was ended, and Babette was finally summoned to clear the table, which she performed very slowly — she was much slower now than usual, being very much fatigued, and almost half-asleep—and so awkwardly, that she upset a decanter of water, for which Paulina sharply reprimanded her.

"How very fortunate it is for Babette," said Madame Fantasque, as soon as the maid had left the apartment, "how very fortunate it is for her to be with a person so patient as I am! I hardly think any one else would keep her, so slow and awkward as she is! But I must say, my angel, if you would try and follow my example, and take things more calmly, as you see me do, it would be much better. Your temper, my darling, is too hasty—you should try to conquer it."

The garde-général had hoped that, after supper, he might perhaps have the long-awaited opportunity to *shine;* even if but for a short time—the hour being so late, he knew that it could not be for long—and so at least leave some sort of favourable impression behind him. But to his mortification, Paulina now made him very peremptorily understand that he must take his departure, which he accordingly prepared to do—Madame Fantasque not pressing him to prolong his visit, but merely saying that she had rejoiced to make his acquaintance, and hoped to see him again. Paulina lighted a small taper, and accompanied him to the landing, when he said to her:

"I am much afraid that your aunt will think me

rather insignificant, and I am sorry—indeed, I feel much mortified at the idea of her forming such an opinion—but what could I do? You saw——"

"Oh! no, no!" she replied, decidedly; "you don't understand my aunt at all. I intended to tell you before her arrival, but had not the time. You think you would have impressed her more favourably if you had had an opportunity of talking more? but you are mistaken. She would not attend to you any more than she has already done—no, not however long you were to stay! I don't know yet what impression you have made—I hope it is a favourable one—but be assured that *here* you must not expect any better opportunity." And having wished him good-night, she set the light down on a table in the corner of the landing, and hurried back into the room.

Mr Sommerfogel, by no means reassured, and still galled at the idea of the insignificant figure he feared he had made—when, too, he had predetermined to be particularly brilliant—rather incautiously commenced descending the dimly-lighted, highly-polished, and carpetless oak stairs, when, having on a pair of new boots with high military heels, he slipped, slid down two or three steps, and sprained one of his ankles. In some pain, he reached the bottom of the stairs. The kitchen-door stood open, a tallow-candle, with a very long smoking black wick, was burning on a table, by the side of which Babette lay asleep in a chair. No doubt she was waiting to fasten the outer door after his exit, and his opening and shutting it, in letting himself out, probably aroused her; for as he stood leaning

against the house for a minute or two to rest his ankle, he heard the door locked and barred behind him. Slowly, and walking with much difficulty, he took his way to the hotel, which was at some distance. The streets through which he had to pass—after leaving the one in which was Madame Fantasque's dwelling—were not the most frequented, and at this hour they were almost deserted, a circumstance that Mr Sommerfogel was rather glad of, as, limping slowly along, and being obliged sometimes to stop altogether to rest his ankle, he preferred not meeting any one. He had proceeded in this way for some distance, when he perceived two watchmen approaching, and it occurred to him that very possibly if they saw him their attention would be aroused by the strangeness of his gait, and they might perhaps detain him by questions, therefore he quickly decided to avoid them, for which purpose he slunk into a passage between two houses, thinking that he would wait there until they had gone by.

But the men had seen him, and noticed his manœuvre, which, as there had been some houses lately robbed in that locality, immediately aroused their suspicions. One of them ran round to the other end of the passage, whilst his companion remained standing by the side of the opening into the street, but did not pass it, and the garde-général, surprised at not seeing the watchmen pass on, concluded that they had turned off in another direction, and was just leaving his place against the wall where he was resting, when he was roughly seized from behind, and at the same instant the other man appeared in front of him. To have

attempted any resistance, he saw at once would have been both useless and dangerous, for the watchmen were well armed, therefore he only assured them that they had made a mistake, told them who he was, and offered to convince them of the truth of his words if they would accompany him to the hotel where he lodged. One of them surlily asked the name of the hotel, and on hearing that it was at so great a distance, both burst out laughing. "No, no, my fine bird, or *summer-bird* as you call yourself, that won't do!" said one of them, "we will not go with you upon any such fool's errand; you would be leading us into the clutches of some of your fine gang! We'll just lodge you safely in a lock-up that is close by here, and where you'll be taken care off till morning, and then you can tell your story to those whose business it is to inquire into it. We have only to do our duty, which is to take you there, and that's the long and the short of the matter. So, come now, you'd best go quietly."

"But look at my uniform!" said Mr Sommerfogel, indignantly, coming forward into the light of a street-lamp, "look at my uniform if you will not believe my words!"

"Your uniform, indeed! It's my belief," said one of the men, "that it's stolen! But how has it become smeared in this way?"

Mr Sommerfogel was not aware that in leaning against the walls, wet with recent rain, he had considerably daubed his coat with brick-dust and mortar.

"I don't know what you mean," he said.

"Oh no, I dare say not!" said one of the men,

laughing. "But how did you get hurt? You walk quite lame."

He told them. They both smiled; and one addressing his comrade, said—"He has fallen from a roof, or a window, or some other place where he had no honest business to be. It's of no use talking any more about it, let's have him off to the lock-up at once; and, I say, my man," he said, to the garde-général, "if you were not after anything wrong, why did you run away from us and hide yourself?"

"Well, do it at your peril! I shall bring an action against you for damages, if you take me!" exclaimed Mr Sommerfogel, now really terrified. It was not the merely having to pass a few hours under restraint—he knew that in the morning he would be liberated—that was not what he so much dreaded, but it was the disgrace that might possibly accrue to him from having been imprisoned even for a few hours—the false reports and misrepresentations that such an untoward circumstance might give rise to. It was these that he dreaded and looked upon with a species of horror. What might Madame Fantasque or Paulina think of it? and in any case it was so degrading—so lowering. "Mind what you do," he said, "I'll bring an action against you for false imprisonment!"

"Ha! ha! we'll mind well enough what we do," replied one of them; "it would have been better for you to have been minding what *you* were doing!—come along." And so saying, the two laid hold on him, one on each side. As a last resource, the poor garde-général drew forth his purse, not very well filled,

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and was opening it, in order to offer them money, when one of them guessed his intention, and said roughly—"Put that back! For what do you take us? Don't you be trying anything of that kind! But come now, and don't make us lose any more time; it will only be the worse for you if you do!" And in despair, Mr Sommerfogel ceased to remonstrate, and without further resistance was led limping away by the two watchmen.

CHAPTER XIII.

"A thousand torments wait on love—
The sigh, the tear, the anguish'd groan;
But he who never learnt to prove
A jealous pang—has nothing known.

For Jealousy, supreme of woe,
Nursed by distorted Fancy's power,
Can wound the heart, bid misery grow,
Which darkens with the ling'ring hour;—

While shadows, blanks to reason's orb,
In dread succession haunt the brain;
And pangs, that ev'ry pang absorb,
In wild convulsive tumults reign."

Jealousy.

WE now return to Mossdale. Lilian and Christopher had just arrived at home again after their excursion to Strasburg.

"I have good news to tell you of Mr Meadows," said Mrs Harebell. "He has been so much better to-day that the doctor allowed him to sit up longer than hitherto, and to come down stairs this evening, and he is still in the drawing-room. He seemed so much to

wish to remain up until your return, and to hear the news you might bring, that I did not object, though perhaps it was hardly prudent; but come," she said, taking Lilian by the arm, who rather hung back, and hurrying her forward, "come now at once and let him hear what you have to tell; you know invalids are impatient. Besides, I wish to send him off to rest; it is high time he should go; there, never mind your packages, nor showing anything to me until afterwards." And she almost pushed her into the room after her brother.

Henry Meadows had become both much thinner and paler with his illness; but just now a bright hectic colour shone in his sunken cheeks, as he eagerly looked towards the open door beyond Christopher.

Lilian had not seen him for some time, and her first sensation on being thus hurried into his presence was one of unmixed and lively satisfaction. She forgot all about Laura and her own jealous torments; a bright bloom overspread her cheeks, and her eyes sparkled with pleasure. On seeing her enter, Mr Meadows raised himself from the reclining posture in the easy-chair in which he was placed, and in a voice rendered somewhat tremulous (though still deep and manly) with emotion and physical weakness combined, said: "You see, Miss Harebell, that I have not yet quite disappeared from the land of the living!" A close observer would have perceived that whilst saying a mere commonplace, his countenance expressed much more. But there was no one present to observe anything of the kind, for Mrs Harebell had left the room

to attend to some household matters; and Christopher, besides that such observations were entirely "out of his way," was at once completely engrossed by recounting to Mr Meadows what he thought might interest and amuse him about anything they happened to have heard or seen in Strasburg.

In regard to Lilian, as soon as Henry Meadows spoke, the spell seemed to be broken; the remembrance of Laura came again with full force; she was angry at herself for having so strangely allowed it to escape her recollection, and angry at Mr Meadows for exercising so much power over her against her will; and altogether she felt so much vexed and mortified, and at the same time so sharp a pang at her heart, on hearing that deep-toned tremulous voice, and catching the first glimpse of the wasted form, that it was with the greatest difficulty she prevented herself from bursting into tears. She did, however, succeed in restraining her tears, but her features assumed a rigid look, and her manner became cold and constrained, under the compulsion she put on her feelings, and the effort she made to be calm and self-possessed. And with some formality, and in mere conventional phrases, with averted looks, she congratulated him on his convalescence. He regarded her for a few moments with a deeply-pained and disappointed countenance, the hectic colour left his face, and with something between a sigh and an almost inaudible groan, he sank back in the chair. Christopher continued talking in a lively strain, and Lilian, with constraint, added a few words.

Ere long, however, Mrs Harebell returned to the apartment, and looking at him, said:

"Ah! I see, you have been exerting yourself too much, overtaxing and counting too much on your returning strength; you are quite exhausted. Christopher and Lilian, you've made him talk too much."

"Why, he has scarcely spoken at all!" said Christopher, laughing.

"Well, then, you have been talking too much to him," she said. "I can plainly see you are fatigued, Mr Meadows, and if you will take my advice you will retire to rest without delay."

Lilian had already left the room ere her mother had ceased speaking.

Mr Meadows silently acquiesced; and with a wearied and spiritless look, was slowly rising to follow the advice, but reseated himself, for just then Mr Harebell appeared, holding a letter in his hand, and said: "I think this letter can hardly be intended for you, Meadows, and it certainly is not for me or any one of my family. It's strange that it should have been sent here. The address, which seems to be in a lady's hand, is to "H. M. Alton, Esq," and the whole of the direction, from England to Mossdale, is quite exact and correct. It's very odd!"

Whilst speaking, Mr Harebell had his eyes fixed on the letter he held, and those of his wife and son were fixed on him; but when he had concluded, he looked up, and was struck with Henry Meadows' countenance, flushed crimson as it was, up to the roots of his hair, whilst his looks were cast down as if from shame.

For a few moments he made no reply, but then, looking up, and seeing the eyes of the others bent on him with surprise, he seemed to become still more confused, and with great effort, and in a hoarse voice, and stretching out an unsteady hand, said: "The name on the address is—is—a mistake; but the letter is—for—for me, sir," he said.

"Oh! indeed; then you know from whom it comes?" said Mr Harebell. No answer. "Well, it's strange," he continued, "that any one should direct a letter to you by another name than your own! and just as inexplicable that you should know it to be meant for you! However, here it is," he said, handing him the letter; which the other clutched with a trembling hand, and immediately thrust into his pocket; and then, slowly and with effort rising, and formally and without looking at them, wishing those present a good evening, he made some steps towards the door; but seemed to feel so weak and unsteady on his feet, that Christopher hastened to offer his assistance, which he in silence accepted; and without saying a word more, quitted the apartment.

Mr Harebell looked very grave, and much displeased.

"No doubt the letter is from Laura," remarked Mrs Harebell, "and I don't see why he should be so very much confused and ashamed at our knowing something of it. It certainly does look strange that she should address him by a fictitious name; but still—he seems so honourable and well-principled—it may be all right, and ——"

"But I don't think it is all right," said her husband, interrupting her. "I think, on the contrary, that there is something in it quite wrong! and I am determined to discover what this affair is—although some people would say, perhaps, that it is no business of mine; but I don't choose to have a man in my employ—and more especially admitted into my family as he is, if I cannot feel confident that his conduct is such as—— In short, it's of no use saying more about it at present; but I must sift this matter, or I will not keep him here."

"Don't you think, at all events, that it would be better," suggested Mrs Harebell, "to let some days elapse before you question him at all about it? He is still but very weak, and you saw how much the subject agitated him!"

"Well—yes—I suppose it would," he replied, hesitatingly; "and, in fact, I think it's what I must do; but if Mr Meadows continues to progress towards recovery, I don't intend to wait longer than a few days; and I'm quite resolved not to let the matter drop!"

Shortly after this conversation, Mrs Harebell sought Lilian, in order to advise her to retire early to rest, on account of the fatigue of the day's journey—a journey that she had particularly wished her to take, because she did not think her looking well, nor in good spirits, and thought that a little change might benefit her. She found her in her room, and said:

"Ah! that's well; I'm glad you are going to bed, for you really look very tired. But, my dear Lilian,

the sun has hurt your eyes, has it not? for it seems to me that they look red and swollen; or is it a fancy of mine in this dim light?"

For a few moments Lilian was silent, and then, in a low voice, whilst stooping to arrange something in a drawer, so as to hide her face, said:

"I never felt more wearied!"

At once, her mother understood now that she had been weeping; and connected in her mind these tears and Mr Sommerfogel's rather unusually prolonged absence from Mossdale, and annoyed and anxious as the thought occurred to her, her heart aching for her daughter, whilst much displeased with her for her obstinate reserve, and feeling very unreasonably angry with the garde-général for being the cause, as she supposed (irrespective of whether he were blamable or not, and of which, in fact, she knew nothing), of bringing sorrow and trouble into the family; she also now kept silence during a few moments. And then, resolving not to seem to notice further the traces of an emotion that Lilian evidently intended to hide from her view, and thinking that it might in some measure divert her thoughts to hear about the incident of the letter claimed by Mr Meadows, she commenced narrating it. Lilian did not interrupt her, nor make the least remark, but removed still farther away from the light of a small lamp, and, seated in a corner of the room, buried her face in her hands, as if she were resting, which her mother thought was the case, and concluded by saying:

"As the direction on the letter is evidently in a

lady's hand, we have no doubt it is from that Laura of whom he spoke so much in his delirium, and seemed so troubled about; but why he should have given a false name I do not understand. Your papa thinks it looks ill, and can be done for no good purpose. It certainly does not look upright and honourable; and, besides, if it were, he would not have seemed so much ashamed and annoyed. I am very sorry about it—exceedingly sorry,—and so is your papa—for ——" But here Lilian gave a broken sob. "I am wearying you, my darling," said Mrs Harebell, "and will leave you now. Get to bed as quickly as you can, for I see that you are over-fatigued. A good night's rest will no doubt quite restore you."

And kissing her on the cheek—wet with some stray tears that had found their way there—she bade her good-night—very faintly responded to by the other—and left the apartment, sighing as she closed the door, and, as she walked away, saying to herself:

"Oh! how much better it would be for her if she would open her heart to me! But she has such a proud spirit! She will not; I am sure she will not tell her sorrow if she thinks it derogatory; and no doubt after gaining her affections that conceited fop —that heartless coxcomb—quite neglects her now! However, I trust that her good sense will lead her ere long to see him in his true character; and he cannot have inspired her with any very deep attachment! Oh! no; that's out of the question! Perhaps what she now feels is rather mortified pride and vanity than wounded affection, and which she may soon get the

better of! And in regard to the emotion she showed this evening, I really think it in great part owing to lowness of spirits from over-fatigue; and when she will have slept, she may feel quite differently; and although I at first regretted having detained her listening to the affair of the letter and Mr Meadows, still it may in some degree change the current of her thoughts, perhaps led to dwell more particularly this evening on her own mortification, on account of having just returned from Strasburg, a city of which Mr Sommerfogel (the sneaking scamp!) so often spoke—and so may do her good."

And Mrs Harebell succeeded, in a great degree, in reassuring herself as to Lilian's present state of mind, and the probable consequences; quite unconscious of the thorn she had just planted in her heart, and left to rankle there!

CHAPTER XIV.

"A coal was hid beneath the grate
('Tis often modest merit's fate),
'Twas small, and so, perhaps forgotten:
Whilst in the room, and near in size,
In a fine casket, lined with cotton,
In pomp and state, a diamond lies.
'So, little gentleman in black,'
The brilliant spark in anger cried,
'I hear, in philosophic clack,
Our families are close allied;
But know, the splendour of my hue,
Excelled by nothing in existence,
Should teach such little folks as you
To keep a more respectful distance.'

At these reflections on his name,
The coal soon redden'd to a flame;
Of his own real use aware,
He only answer'd with a sneer—
* * * *
'For know, I boast a double praise,
As I can *warm* as well as shine.'"

FOR a few days now it was found that Mr Meadows had an augmentation of fever, and could not leave his room. Mrs Harebell attributed this relapse to over-exertion on the evening

of the day when Christopher and Lilian went to Strasburg; but her husband ascribed it to the effects of the mysterious letter, and often looked grave, and shook his head when he spoke of it. All the family were then assembled in the breakfast-room, and Christopher remarked:

"What strange fancies sick people sometimes take into their heads! Henry Meadows never appeared to like the garde-général very much, but this morning he seems to have suddenly conceived a most violent antipathy to him, amounting to downright hatred—it's quite absurd! One might imagine that poor, harmless Mr Sommerfogel had deeply injured him!"

"Hum!" ejaculated Mrs Harebell, with a meaning look, and in a very unusual tone of asperity said: "Hum! I don't think it at all absurd. On the contrary, I think it shows Mr Meadows' penetration. It would be well, Christopher, if you and some others," she said, with emphasis, "could see through his character as well. I heartily wish that we *all* had as much penetration in the matter as poor Mr Meadows seems to have!"

Christopher regarded her with the utmost astonishment. His sweet mother, so kind and considerate, and usually so remarkably charitable and indulgent in her judgments! He could scarcely believe that he heard aright.

Maud became very red, looked down, and seemed much confused; but just then no one noticed or thought of her. Lilian felt gratified on hearing her mother so warmly coincide in opinion with Mr

Meadows, without at all considering the merits of the case. And the satisfaction she felt, gave to her countenance a half smile, which her mother, who had glanced at her to see what effect her words might have, noticed with displeasure and anger, for she thought that Lilian, obstinately secure in her own opinion, was only inclined to smile at her attempts to shake it, and therefore it was with increased warmth that she added: "Fortunately, he has not troubled us with his frivolous company, lately. I only wish he would stay away altogether. I don't like to be uncivil to any one; but really when he comes again, as no doubt he will, I'm sure that I shall not be able to receive him very——"

"Bless me, my dear wife!" exclaimed Mr Harebell, laughing, "what has come over you? I begin to fear that you have also an attack of fever! What can the garde-général, that puppet in uniform, have done so highly to offend you? Until now, you seemed rather to like him, as indeed I do myself, for he certainly is very good-natured, polite and courteous, and——"

"Yes, yes! in manner he is well enough—only too polite," said Mrs Harebell. "It is by the speciousness of such characters that one is deceived."

"Well, but," said her husband, "what is it that has caused you now suddenly to think so ill of him? for a while ago, you certainly did not." She was silent. "Ah," he said, "it is as I conjectured; you have no reason to give! Don't give way to a causeless dislike; but indeed, my dear, it is so foreign to your nature to do so, that I really wonder at you."

"I sincerely wish that my dislike might prove to be causeless!" she murmured, with a sigh.

"I am sure that it is causeless," continued Mr Harebell. "The man is not burdened with much brains, there can be no mistake about that; but he has 'no harm in him,' and is not without some good traits; in fact, I think he has about as much good in him as one can reasonably expect in such a character."

"Oh! you may be sure"——Maud began to say, but stopped in some confusion.

"Well, Maud," said her father, looking amused, "are you about to constitute yourself the garde-général's brave champion? Come, let's hear what you have to say in his favour."

"Oh! no, indeed not," she replied, reddening very much; "I—I—had no intention—I—did not mean—anything at all—of the kind."

"Is it so?" he said; "well, I'm sorry to hear it, for now I suppose you intended to join with your mother in attacking him. Poor man! he seems to have a strong party formed against him here!"

Maud, looking very much confused and ashamed, was silent.

"And you, Lilian," said Mr Harebell, "which side do you take in this 'division of the house?' Are you of the same opinion as your mother and Maud, or as Christopher and myself?"

"I'm quite inclined to agree in your view of the case, papa," she said, smiling.

"Oh! very well," he said; "then we have the majority."

Mrs Harebell looked at Lilian in much surprise, wondering how she could speak on the subject with such apparent indifference.

But now the family separated, to pursue their several avocations. Lilian proceeded to the library to fetch a book. The library was a very small room, without other furniture than shelves for books, from ceiling to floor, one small table in the centre, and a couple of chairs, and she expected to find the room unoccupied; but, on opening the door, was astonished and startled to see Mr Meadows, whom she had supposed confined to his room, seated at the table, wrapped in a dressing gown, looking thin and emaciated, his countenance ghastly pale, his hair matted and in disorder, and his brows strongly contracted. He seemed too much engrossed in his occupation of writing to notice the opening of the door; and Lilian stood for a few moments on the threshold, as if transfixed to the spot and unable to move; then, however, happening to look up, he caught sight of her, and some colour came into his face as he laid down his pen and hastily folded the paper on which he had been writing.

Lilian also reddened, and felt embarrassed, and angry at herself for being so, and hastened to say hurriedly, "Don't let me disturb you; I only came to seek a book, which is not of any consequence just now; I will look for it another time."

And she was just about to close the door again, when, in an earnest, anxious, and supplicating tone, he begged of her to remain a few moments, as there was something he particularly wished to say to her. In silence,

and much embarrassed, and vexed at herself, she felt that she could not refuse, and advanced a few steps into the room, he rising and placing the other chair for her, which she showed no intention to take, but remained standing.

"Very well, Miss Harebell," he said, "if you will not sit, neither will I." And he also stood, supporting himself by resting his hands on the table; and as he did so, Lilian saw that he trembled, and that it was evidently painful to him to remain standing, and she therefore took the other chair, and motioning him to be seated, said, "I'm sure you ought not to be up to-day, Mr Meadows, and occupied in writing." And then the idea coming into her mind that he was probably writing to Laura, she added, with a shade of ill-humour, "It is very imprudent—very foolish."

"Yes, if I had only my health to consider, I might think so too," he said, with a deep sigh.

Lilian was vexed to find that she involuntarily echoed the sigh, and rather haughtily said: "Well, of course you know your own concerns best. It seems to me to be folly thus to sacrifice your health—for—for—perhaps a little impatience; but I know nothing about it, and am talking about what I don't understand. What is it that you wish to say to me?"

He again sighed; but this time she was more on her guard, and although she could not help feeling a sudden oppressive sensation at her heart, she prevented its exhaling itself as a repetition of the sigh.

"Yes; I will hasten to tell you whilst I have the opportunity; and, to begin, I must beg you, Miss

Harebell, not to judge me hardly, nor from appearances, which may go much against me; for although, no doubt," he said, mournfully, "it is indifferent to you, and you think it ought to be so to me, yet I feel anxious to—I cannot bear—I earnestly entreat you to suspend your judgment when I shall be far away!" She started, but he did not seem to perceive it, and continued—"When I shall be far away—for I intend to leave here in a day or two, if I am able, and I think I shall be able, for a distant journey, the result of which is very uncertain. It may be such that I never more return!" he said, with a look of anguish, and covering his face with his handkerchief to hide his emotion. Lilian felt strongly inclined to burst into tears; her heart seemed to rise to her throat with a choaking sensation, and her tongue to cleave to the roof of her mouth.

"I am in very great trouble of mind," he went on to say, "very great sorrow and anxiety,—will you not give me the consolation—will you refuse me the comfort of being able to think—before I go away, perhaps never to return—that you, at least you, will not be led away by—by appearances—or even by—by circumstances—to—to—think hardly of me—to—to—think that my—my conduct, in short, has been dishonest, and, —but what—what am I saying?" he said. "Believe me, oh! believe me, Miss Harebell, there has been no dishonesty!—I cannot—I must not—explain. Oh! how unfortunate I am!"—and groaning, he again covered his face with his handkerchief.

The choaking sensation in Lilian's throat became

stronger and stronger. She made one or two ineffectual efforts to speak, and then, overpowered by conflicting feelings, fairly gave way, and burst into tears.

For an instant—just for an instant—Mr Meadows seemed struck with astonishment, and then was transported with joy. His health and strength seemed on a sudden to have returned; he sprang from the chair on which he was seated, and came to Lilian's side; leaning over her fondly, and taking her hands in his; first calling her "dearest Miss Harebell," and then "darling Lilian." As for her, she seemed to herself to be in a dream, and although her tears still continued to flow, the feelings that had caused them had completely vanished, and also not the slightest remembrance of Laura was now present to her mind; all that had caused her uneasiness on that account was entirely forgotten, as if it had never been. For a few moments she allowed him to retain her hands, and he went on to say—"Trust me, dearest, do but trust me! all may yet come right! I am not what I appear to be; but a time may come, when—oh! yes, now that I feel so hopeful, I think it will certainly come! I think it must come, when all will be cleared up! and then——" but here he stopped suddenly, and Lilian gently drew her hands away, for it now occurred to her that she ought to do so; but she did not feel angry, and would not feign; therefore, feeling neither anger nor shame, she looked up ingenuously, showing a happy countenance, with some tears like dew-drops still hanging on her cheek. To Mr Meadows they seemed far more beautiful and precious than the most costly pearls, and

he continued,—"I must ask you to trust me yet awhile, without explanation, but——" Lilian now heard herself called, and started from her seat. "Will you—will you trust me?" he earnestly asked, again taking one of her hands, and pressing it fondly.

"Yes, yes," she replied, as she hurried from the room.

When she found herself alone, and had time to reflect, Lilian did not feel at all satisfied with herself. She had allowed her feelings to overcome her judgment, "but then, in the sorrow and trouble he was in," she thought, "how could she have prevented it?—but still, it was not right, and she ought not to have acted as she had done," and she sighed, "what would her parents think of her conduct?" She could only answer herself by saying that they would, no doubt, highly disapprove of it. And then she began to blame Mr Meadows. "Was it right—was it generous—in him, to lead her, almost compel her, to behave in such a way as her parents must disapprove of? and in fact that she could not but disapprove of herself? He had not said anything whatsoever about Laura. "Surely he might have said something, just enough to make me feel easy on that head," she said to herself; "without explaining all, he might have said something. Perhaps he is engaged to her; the engagement may be distasteful to him, and he may hope to be able honourably to break it off; but supposing he finds he cannot with honour do so, what then? And besides, he spoke as if, that one impediment removed, which no doubt is something in connection with this Laura, that then there would be no further obstacle: whereas he must

be aware that it is exceedingly doubtful that my parents would ever consent to my marriage with any one in his situation; nay, it's more than probable that they never would consent! Then is it right—is it generous—in him, in the meantime, to—but I have promised to trust him! and what am I doing? is this trusting him? Oh, no! Well, I will try to do so, and not to think any more about that odious Laura. But I certainly might have asked Mr Meadows some questions, which he might have declined answering if he had thought fit. Oh, dear! it was very stupid of me not to do so! However, he will not be leaving just yet, and I will take an opportunity merely to ask him one or two questions. But will that be trusting him? Oh, dear! oh, dear! how I wish that I had opened my heart to mamma long ago! But to tell her first now, when the affair has gone so far—now when I have promised to trust Mr Meadows, and have almost engaged myself to him—to him whom I have reason to think is probably engaged to another! Oh! how ill I have behaved! I could not acknowledge it! Oh, no, I could not!" and she wept long and passionately.

About an hour after the scene in the library, Mr Meadows was found there by Mrs Harebell, lying with his head on the table, and in a state of great exhaustion. She gently chid him for leaving his room, and had him assisted to return there, where she had some restoratives conveyed to him.

CHAPTER XV.

"Or art thou come on the hills to dwell,
Where the sweet-voiced Echoes have many a cell?
Where the moss bears print of the wild deer's tread,
And the heath like a royal robe is spread?
* * * * * *
He hath flown from the woods to the ocean's breast,
To his pride of place on the billow's crest!
Oh! who shall say, to a spirit free,
'*There* lies the pathway of bliss for thee!'"

HEMANS.

PILIAN passed a restless night, and on the following morning arose unrefreshed, and troubled, and anxious. She languidly took her place at the breakfast table, where the family were already assembled.

"I wonder how that foolish fellow, Meadows, is, this morning?" said Mr Harebell. "I hope he may soon recover, if it were only on account of his being so unmanageable an invalid! really, if he continues much longer to be ill, I don't know how we shall be able to keep him within any sort of reasonable bounds!"

"He is strangely imprudent; I don't understand

it," said his wife, "for in other respects he seems so sensible and thoughtful! I have not sent up his breakfast. I thought it better to leave him undisturbed this morning a little longer than usual, after his imprudence of yesterday, the rather, as last night he took some refreshment considerably later than usual; but I think I may send it now," she said, as a servant entered the room.

"Oh, Mr Meadows was up very early!" said the servant. "I thought it had been all settled over night; he told us that he had to go a journey. We were surprised, cook and I, because we believed him to be still so weak; but he told us, he hoped to gain strength on the way, and we thought it must be all right. And he had a boy from the factory to carry his portmanteau to the village, where he said there would be a conveyance to take him to the railway station. We wondered that the carriage had not come to fetch him from the house, and he so weak yet! And I should think he must have arrived there long ago, and is most likely far away on his journey by this time. But, dear me! how strange that you should, none of you, know anything about it! He was for going without taking any breakfast; but cook persuaded him to take a little bread and milk. And I think I ought to tell you that he gave something to cook and me: he always was uncommon generous; and we often said he could hardly have been expected to do much more if he had been a real gentleman, and——"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr Harebell, "what can be the meaning of such strange conduct! Why this

looks worse and worse! I'll go to his room, and see whether I can find anything in the way of explanation there," and so saying, he hurried from the apartment.

Lilian, for an instant, felt her heart cease to beat; she turned deathly pale; the room seemed to swim before her eyes; a hollow sound to fill her ears; and she felt so faint and giddy, that she might have fallen from her chair, had she not leaned against the table: she was very near swooning; but in the general confusion and surprise of the moment, no one observed the state in which she was.

"Well, I would not have expected Meadows to behave in such a way as this," said Christopher; "so downright cowardly and sneaking, and no mistake."

"I'm exceedingly surprised! I should not have believed him capable of such conduct!" said Mrs Harebell; and indignantly added, "its extremely ungrateful, too, of him! both towards your papa and towards myself."

"Perhaps he was afraid of being questioned—and foresaw that he would be—about that letter. Don't you think it probable, Lilian?" said Maud But her sister in reply only gave utterance to an indistinct murmur.

"In my opinion, it's a clear case of acknowledged guilt and cowardice," said Walter.

"I think it proves that he must have done something very bad indeed!" said Jasper, solemnly.

"Oh, no! I don't think so," said little Bertha; "though perhaps he was afraid of being scolded;—I don't like to be scolded myself—and I hope he'll soon come back again. And I think Lilian looks as if she

thought as I do, only she seems afraid to say so; and besides, she seems to have a headache, and to feel sick."

But now Mr Harebell returned to the breakfast-room. He held in his hand a letter, and said, "I have just found this on the table in Mr Meadows' room; it may throw some light on the subject." The eyes of all were eagerly directed towards him, as he opened it and glanced over the contents. Lilian's gaze was fixed with painful intensity on the letter, as she awaited in almost breathless attention to hear what seemed to her "her doom." "Hum! it's a strange affair," he exclaimed; "he explains nothing at all! but entreats that he may not be judged of from appearances (they certainly do go strongly against him, I must say), nor be condemned unheard (he has thought it prudent to put himself out of the way of being heard); excuses himself for having quitted us in such a way, which he hopes we will pardon, and which he much regrets, being obliged by circumstances to do. Says that he is going a distant journey, and will probably be absent a considerable time——"

"What folly! what madness! he's not in a fit state. Oh! how very unfit, for a long journey," broke in Mrs Harebell; and, woman-like, now quite losing sight of the anger and indignation she so lately felt at his conduct, to think only of the state of his health. "Oh! it will kill him! no doubt it will kill him! he will probably die on the way."

Lilian could not prevent a deep sigh from escaping her; but it passed unnoticed by any one else. And

her father continued: "And he hopes that I may meet some one to supply his place at the factory, unless I think that, as the work-people are now better trained, I can dispense with an English overlooker (you see, he says nothing about occupying the same situation again, even if he does return); and he begs that we will kindly take charge of the effects that he must leave in our care, (oh! indeed, very convenient for him, no doubt), which he hopes and expects, ere long, to be fortunate enough to be able to return and claim; and to thank us for all our kindness! Very considerate, truly! but when he comes, I'll tell him what I think of his conduct, without circumlocution, he may be assured of that, be he in good or in bad health. Had I spoken out, and questioned him as I wished (but was prevented by his supposed state of weakness), it would have been more satisfactory to me, and would very probably have stopped him from running away, which would have been far better for him."

"He is much more likely to die on the road," said Mrs Harebell, "than ever to return again here!"

Lilian groaned; but it only seemed like an assent to her mother's opinion.

"But I have not come to the end of the letter," said Mr Harebell; "he concludes by saying, 'Although I most ardently—more ardently than I can find words to express—desire to return to Mossdale, yet, if I cannot do so under satisfactory circumstances, you will never see me more! One of the family will hear from me; but I shall not appear amongst you again.' I suppose he would write to Christopher; and I wonder

what he means by satisfactory circumstances? 'But encouraged as I now feel myself to look forward to a brighter future, I am led to be hopeful, and to think that the issue of my journey will prove favourable; yet I cannot hide from myself, that it is at present uncertain; and, if I should fail, you must try to forget me, you and every member of your family—to forget me, as if I had never existed!—but I will hope better things. And in the meantime, dear friends, (allow me to call you such, for such you have been to me) pardon me. I earnestly entreat, *all* of you, to pardon me for the seeming ingratitude of my present conduct, for, oh! I am not ungrateful! I feel very grateful to you *all*; but my heart is too full to say more, and I flatter myself I shall be understood.'

"Well," said Mr Harebell, when he had concluded reading the letter, "it's my opinion that those who talk the most about gratitude, as a rule, feel the least of it; and the present, I think, is just such a case. Had he felt a tenth part of the gratitude he expresses, he would not have acted as he has done!" Which opinion was heartily responded to by Mrs Harebell; who felt much annoyed and disturbed by conflicting feelings; angry and indignant at Mr Meadows, and yet good-naturedly anxious, uneasy and sorry for him, on account of the state of his health. The current of her thoughts, however, was changed, by happening to glance at Lilian, and remarking how very pale and ill she looked. She questioned her, and receiving for answer that she "did not feel very well," advised her to go and lie down. And glad to escape to the solitude of her own room,

and, anxious to collect her troubled thoughts, she at once followed the advice.

But in vain did Lilian, when alone, try to arrange her thoughts in some kind of order—for they were in a state of great confusion; and it was, besides, quite true that she did not feel well, having a violent headache; yet the tumult of her mind was so overpowering and tormenting, as in great part to drown the sense of the physical pain she was suffering; and she resolutely set herself to work, if possible, to think calmly of her situation, and to fix upon some line of conduct. She found that Mr Meadows' flight had not lessened her attachment to him, but rather the reverse; that she could not believe him guilty of any crime; that she was quite disposed to trust him; and firmly believed that, if in his power to do so, he would return to Mossdale, and that ultimately all in his conduct which now appeared ambiguous, would be satisfactorily explained. But he might not be able to return, for he had said in his letter, that unless he could do so under certain circumstances, which it seemed were doubtful, he would not. And it was not at all improbable, as her mother had suggested, that he might die on the road. As this thought crossed her mind, she sighed, and felt a sharp pang at her heart; and now that she was alone, a tear or two stole down her cheeks; but supposing that he were to survive the journey, and that he were not prevented by the circumstances he had alluded to, and so were to return — What then? Would her parents consent for her to marry an overlooker? And was it right and honourable of her, in the meantime,

to continue to nourish in secret an attachment that they would disapprove of? And how repugnant it felt to her to be acting so deceitful a part towards her kind and indulgent parents! Oh! if she had but told her mother! or if she could now make up her mind to tell her!—it seemed to her that it would do her an inexpressible amount of good, to be reasoned with, and talked to, by her mother; yes, even if she were to censure her, and to tell her to do what she felt the most disinclined to! But how could she tell her now? Now, when Mr Meadows had drawn upon himself to so great a degree, the just anger and suspicion of her parents, and given them such serious offence? And when, too, her mother could hardly fail to look upon her attachment to him as a blind infatuation which had led her to love one who had just proved that he did not return her affection! one, too, much below her in station; an affair, in short—as it must appear—so exceedingly undignified on her part! so unwarrantably unfeminine! and so inexcusably wanting in delicacy and right feeling! Oh! no; proud Lilian—sensitive Lilian—could not bring herself to consent to—what appeared to her—such self-abasement—such utter humiliation!—how much soever to do so might tend to ease the trouble of her mind, and give her help and comfort in her present perplexity. Therefore she remained in a state of the most painful irresolution and anxiety, as she repeated over and over again to herself, "Surely—surely Mr Meadows will write soon; he will not leave me long in this painful state of complete uncertainty!"

She would have sought for strength and guidance in prayer, had it not been that the weight on her conscience, under the idea that she was deceiving her parents, prevented her from seeking consolation from that powerful source; and it did not occur to her that her first step should have been to pray for more humility, for strength to conquer her own proud spirit, and to do that which she felt conscious ought to be done, however humiliating it might seem to her.

And thus we must leave Lilian at present, a prey to her own uneasy thoughts;—of a frank nature, and therefore unused to dissemble, now suffering acutely under a sense of the deceitful part she was acting.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Speak gently to the little child!
Its love be sure to gain;
Teach it in accents soft and mild,
It may not long remain.

It is written on the rose,
In its glory's full array:
Read what those buds disclose:
'*Passing away.*'

* * * * *

It is written on the trees,
As their young leaves glist'ning play;
And on brighter things than these—
'Passing away.'"

MRS HEMANS.

"OH, dear! I have such a pain in my head!" said little Bertha to Maud, as she laid her head wearily in her sister's lap, one day, only a few days after the incidents narrated in the foregoing chapter. "Feel how hot it is," she said; and Maud put her hand on the child's forehead, and found it burning; and saying she was sure she must

have a very bad headache, placed her gently on a sofa, and then hastened to tell her mother, who immediately put the child into bed, and then left the room to consult with her husband, and have a doctor sent for. Maud was also going, but little Bertha called her back.

"Stay, Maud," she said, "I want to speak to you. I wish the pain in my head would be better for a little, whilst I tell you It's very bad! but don't go. I'll try to say what I want. Do you think you would all be very much grieved if I were to die, and go to be an angel in heaven?"

"Oh! Bertha," said Maud, "how you talk! Why think of such a thing?"

"I'm afraid poor mamma would be very much grieved," she went on, "and I want to tell you, Maud, that you must try and comfort her, if I die ——"

"But it's nonsense talking in that way, Bertha, you need not think of dying now!"

"Well, I don't know—I'm not sure (oh! how bad this pain is!); but I think—it seems to me—that I'm going to die before long—perhaps very soon. I'm very sorry that I ever was naughty, or that I ever vexed mamma or any of you. Oh, dear! the pain is so bad! But I want you very much to promise me that you'll comfort mamma when I'm dead?"

"My darling little sister!" said Maud, kissing her feverish cheek, "I wish you would not torment yourself with such thoughts! I dare say you will soon be quite well again!"

"No, Maud, I don't think I shall," she said; "and

I can't feel satisfied unless you promise me. Do promise me that you will try to comfort poor mamma."

"Well, well, dear, if that will be any satisfaction to you, I promise you that I will—I solemnly promise you!" she said, with tears in her eyes, and wondering what could have led the child to take so strange a fancy—the like of which she never before had done, although, apparently, she had been much more seriously indisposed than now; whilst the words she had just addressed to her had a strangely impressive effect, and she could not shake off a feeling of fear and dread as of some approaching calamity.

Meanwhile, little Bertha, after a faint smile and look of contentment, on receiving the desired promise, closed her eyes, and remained perfectly motionless, either in sleep or a kind of stupor; and as Maud contemplated the death-like stillness of the little form, she could not prevent herself from thinking with a shudder, that perhaps her beloved little sisters' words would prove prophetic, and, much moved, she burst into tears; and then—fearing to have disturbed or alarmed her—apprehensively looked towards the bed. But the little figure did not move, nor the eyes unclose; and Mrs Harebell now entering the apartment, Maud hastened to her own room, and there gave way to a copious fit of weeping, for the cause of which she could not have given any satisfactory reason.

When the doctor arrived, he pronounced little Bertha's illness to be the commencement of an attack of water on the brain. And during a few days, despite all that could be done to arrest the progress of

the malady, it continued to increase—during the whole of which time the little sufferer seldom spoke, and never coherently; and then, she one day drew her mother's face, as she was bending over, down to hers to be kissed, when, opening her eyes very wide, she gazed around the room wonderingly, as if she had seen the space filled with some beautiful vision, and then, with a gentle sigh, she closed her eyes, her head seemed to sink deeper into the pillows, whilst the little white face assumed a perfectly-composed, peaceful, and happy look—her bright golden-coloured hair, like a halo, lying in a soft and wavy ring on the pillow around it. Little Bertha's spirit had flown away from its earthly tenement!

We will not attempt to describe the sorrow of the grief-stricken parents, nor the regrets of the whole family, nor the wonderful change that the death of this little child—as the death of a child so often does—made to them all. As for the mother, she missed her indescribably at almost every instant of the day. Mr Harebell, too, sadly missed his little daughter when he returned home in an evening. It was pretty Bertha, with her smiling, happy face, who used to run to meet him, and take his hat and stick, bring his slippers, and lay the newspaper ready for him. Christopher had been in the habit of telling stories to her in the evenings—mostly drawn from what he had been reading—and it had been a source of much interest to him to provide something during the day to tell to Bertha in the evening, which, as he had taught her to expect, she failed not to ask for;

and now he found that he had lost what at the time he had no idea was so great and constant a pleasure. Lilian and Maud were surprised to find how much their little sister had been in their thoughts—how much they had been in the habit of thinking: "This or that will be just the thing for her—will please, amuse, or be in some way well for, Bertha;" and how great an amusement, pleasure, and interest, having so to think, was to themselves! Walter and Jasper had been in the habit of constructing playthings for her, which, of course, was no small amusement to them; and, moreover, had become used to have—what she considered as such — their extraordinary skill and cleverness admired and wondered at by little Bertha; and she had always to be present on such important occasions as the letting off of fireworks of their own making, the ascension of their monster kite, mimic balloons, and all other such-like experiences, and the more scientific they were, and consequently the less she understood of them, the more she admired them.

Each individual, too, felt so strange and oppressive a sense of stillness and void in the house, as could hardly have been supposed possible to result merely from the absence of one small inmate. But they could not think of her as quite gone from them. It seemed to them that her spirit must be somewhere near to and about them; and the realities of another state of existence seemed more familiar than hitherto, and to gleam in sudden flashes of conviction, not on all alike, but in some measure beyond what they

were wont to experience, upon every member of the household—servants included.

Mrs Harebell had now no longer such a cheery look—her countenance assumed a pensive cast, but she had the comfort of feeling resigned, and therefore did not look fretful. Her vivacity forsook her, and a certain languor spread itself over her whole manner.

Her little sister's unexpected death had a powerful effect upon Lilian, who felt like one suddenly awakened to the realities of life out of a deep sleep—a sleep in which she had been struggling under the power of a painful nightmare. In what light did the sorrow and trouble with which she had been engrossed and under which she had been suffering, appear to her now—now in close contact with death? As nothing—"as less than nothing," she said to herself, "not more substantial than shadows! How wrong of me to allow myself to be so absorbed! how wrong, how foolish, and how selfish! Here have I been wrapped up in my own thoughts and feelings—all my anxiety perfectly useless—for I did no good by it, even to Mr Meadows, whilst my dear little sister was dying, and the whole family about to be plunged into sorrow and mourning! And mamma—oh! poor mamma must be nearly heart-broken, for I know how she suffers, though she does not complain. And I—stupid, foolish I—was passing my time in dreaming! But it shall be so no longer. I will no longer give myself up to my own thoughts!" Then the idea occurred to her that perhaps if she were to open her

heart to her mother, it might strengthen her in this resolution. "Yes," she said to herself, "I will tell mamma all about it, and if she blames me—is very angry with me—it may do me good; but—oh, dear! how humiliating it will be to tell her now!—now, when I must seem to her to be completely deserted by Mr Meadows! But I deserve to be humiliated, for I ought to have told her long ago." And in order to prevent her courage from evaporating in empty resolves, Lilian at once sought her mother, and hiding her face on her shoulder, she opened her heart to her, and told her all about her unfortunate attachment, from its first beginning until the present time; for, being naturally frank, when she had once "broken through the ice" of her reserve, she found it comparatively easy to go on, so she told her all, without any restrictions. Mrs Harebell listened to her in extreme surprise, and for a few moments after she had concluded, still remained silent.

"I have done very wrong, mamma," said Lilian, "in so long hiding it from you. I knew that it was wrong, and often felt very unhappy under it; and oh, mamma, if you knew how—how—I have suffered!" she said, bursting into tears, "I think you would forgive me."

"Dearest Lilian! darling child!" said her mother, fondly kissing her, and sadly contemplating her pale cheek and thin form, so changed from her once blooming appearance. I was not silent, my love, because I am displeased with you, but because I was so much surprised at what you have just told me. I had

thought——But it matters not what I thought, I was under a false impression. I am glad that you have opened your heart to me—very glad for your sake, for I am sure it will be better for you, and you have also done a benefit to me, dearest, by telling me, for I knew that you suffered. I saw it, but so long as you kept your heart shut from me, I could do nothing to help you, and it was therefore doubly painful and distressing to me to see; but now, my love, I hope to have the satisfaction of helping you by my advice, and comforting you as I used to do in your childish sorrows and troubles, when you were a little child! But first, I must tell you that Mr Meadows' character appears to me now in a much worse light than I ever expected to have to view it, even after he had left us in so ungrateful and inexcusable a way! I now think very ill indeed of him; and——"

"Oh! find fault with me—blame me as much as you will—but don't speak against Mr Meadows! Pray, don't, mamma; I cannot bear it; indeed I cannot!" said Lilian.

"But if I am to be of any use to you, I must speak the truth, Lilian; I am very sorry for you, but you had better hear the truth. He has been deceiving you, my child, and taking a most dishonourable advantage of our kindness and hospitality!"

"Oh! mamma, mamma!" exclaimed Lilian, weeping; "don't think so; don't say so!"

"But I must think so, and therefore I say so. He has forsaken you; forsaken you in a most cowardly way, after amusing himself by gaining your affection.

He has forsaken you; and very probably is now completely forgetting you!"

"Oh! no, no! you are mistaken. I'm sure you are mistaken!" said Lilian, wringing her hands. "Appearances are against him, but——"

"I must seem very cruel, my love," said her mother, "but remember it is for your good. How is it that you quite overlook all about Laura? and the fact that whilst Mr Meadows pretended to be attached to you, he explained nothing to you about that person, with whom his mind was certainly very much occupied during his illness?"

Lilian was silent.

"Come come, my darling, you must try to forget him," said Mrs Harebell, "as he has forgotten you!"

"Oh! I cannot believe it! I cannot believe it! Oh! no, no!" exclaimed Lilian, in great agitation, "you are mistaken—you have no right to say so—it is very wrong of you——"

"Lilian!"

"I'm quite sure that he has not forgotten me—perhaps he is ill—perhaps——Oh dear! I don't know what may have happened; but he would not forget me—he could not forget me! Besides, mamma, I cannot forget him; indeed I cannot."

It was now Mrs Harebell's turn to weep, and covering her face with her hands, she wept bitterly.

"Mamma, dear, dear mamma!" said Lilian, much moved, and gently attempting to remove her hands from her face, "what is the matter? have I done anything—have I said anything—to cause this grief?"

"Unhappy mother that I am!" exclaimed Mrs Harebell, "unhappy mother that I am! Just bereaved of one beloved child, I find that another has completely lost her peace of mind—and—and—is rendered wretched! Dear little Bertha is at peace; but you, Lilian, you——" and sobs choked her utterance.

"Oh! how selfish! how inconsiderate of me! Don't think any more about it, dear mamma, said Lilian, tenderly embracing her kind loving mother, "pray don't think any more about it! I spoke thoughtlessly —foolishly; you have no cause to be uneasy about me; indeed you have not. I will——" (try to forget Mr Meadows, she was on the point of saying, but checked herself, for she felt sure that she could not forget him, and having promised to trust him, she would not try to forget him). "I will try to be quite cheerful and contented; I ought to be, and it is very wrong if I am not so. Oh! I think I soon shall be; you will see that I shall not be unhappy; indeed I shall not" (she stifled a rising sigh in saying this), "so don't grieve about me, dear mamma. I assure you there is no cause, and you will soon see me cheerful again as I used to be; but here comes Maud, who will probably have something interesting to tell you, as she generally has. I don't know how she manages it, and wish that I could do the same! so now, don't fret any more about me," she said, kissing her, and hurrying from the apartment just as Maud entered, for she was in haste to gain the solitude of her own room, ere an almost irresistible impulse to give way to a burst of grief should overpower her, thus giving a

practical contradiction to her words, and causing her mother to have fresh grounds for sorrow and anxiety on her account.

But as soon as Lilian had shut herself in her own room, the inclination to burst into tears suddenly passed away, for on collecting her thoughts, she first felt angry and indignant at Mr Meadows for leaving her in so perplexed and painful a position, and for having so acted as to put it out of her power to clear his character to her mother. "If he had but written a few lines to explain the cause of his flight," she said to herself; "if he had but told me who that Laura is, and why he was so troubled about her, then, no doubt, I might have explained all satisfactorily to mamma, and have saved her and myself a great deal of unnecessary uneasiness! but why did he not tell me about Laura, who evidently occupied so much of his thoughts when he was ill; never so much as said one word about her to me or any one of the family afterwards; never so much as mentioned her name? It's very strange!" and her cheeks became flushed with anger as these jealous thoughts took possession of her mind; when starting, she said to herself—"But what am I doing? Is this trusting him? Begone all such unworthy suspicions! I will think no more of them! I must be patient—I must wait—and if Mr Meadows lives to return—ah! if he lives to return!—all will no doubt be satisfactorily explained!" And then, upon thinking over what had passed between herself and her mother, Lilian found that she felt wonderfully relieved by having opened her heart to that true friend.

She wisely thought that the burst of grief to which her mother had given way, suffering as she still was from little Bertha's loss, would rather benefit her than otherwise, if the cause were at once removed, and she determined to keep so strict a watch over herself, not to allow herself to be engrossed with her own uneasy thoughts, nor give way to gloominess; but to occupy herself more in promoting the happiness of those around her. She thought her mother would so soon have the consolation of seeing her improve in cheerfulness and activity that she felt easy on that head; and it seemed as if a heavy weight on her mind and conscience, which had so long been crushing and galling her spirit, had suddenly been removed, and therefore it would be comparatively easy to her to be more contented, cheerful, and happy.

CHAPTER XVII.

"My banks they are furnish'd with bees,
Whose murmur invites one to sleep;
My grottoes are shaded with trees,
And my hills are white over with sheep.
I seldom have met with a loss,
Such health do my fountains bestow;
My fountains, all border'd with moss,
Where the hare-bells and violets grow."

SHENSTONE.

ABOUT a month now passed over, and all remained in the same state at Mossdale. Nothing had been heard of Mr Meadows; and yet Lilian not only seemed, but also really felt, more cheerful and contented than she did four weeks ago;—not but that she often grieved over this silence, whatever the cause might be, and often, when alone, shed tears; still, she felt it such a relief to have opened her heart to her mother, and to have her conscience at ease. And the effort she had made to prevent Mrs Harebell from having cause to think her unhappy, and not allowing herself, as heretofore, to be engrossed by

her own thoughts and feelings, had had the best of effects in calming and soothing the trouble of her mind, and in keeping under some control the anxieties and tormenting perplexities that would frequently arise in her heart.

It may by some be thought strange that Mrs Harebell did not tell Lilian much more decidedly and peremptorily than was the case—Mr Meadows being so much beneath her in station—that even if he were to keep faith with her and return, and that all else in his conduct which now seemed equivocal were to be satisfactorily explained, yet, as her parents could not sanction such a union, it was her absolute duty to do her utmost to conquer the attachment; and, in fact, that it would be highly culpable and unbecoming in her to do otherwise; and would have plainly told her, instead of merely hinting it, that she had acted very wrongly in having, under any circumstances, received his addresses; and very wrongly and imprudently, in allowing her affections to be at all so engaged. But Mrs Harebell knew Lilian's character too well to think it advisable to speak to her in such a way. She saw that her affections were engaged; and that therefore now to warn her or reproach her, would be useless, as it could not prevent what was already done. She had at once told her the opinion she entertained of the object. She had not hidden from Lilian how unworthy she thought him; nor how utterly hopeless, under any circumstances, her unfortunate attachment must be; and she felt sure that at present she could not do more, with any good effect. Also, as Mrs

Harebell did not believe the attachment to be mutual, but on the contrary, thought she had good reason for an opposite inference, she trusted to time to undeceive Lilian; and therefore did not mention anything on the subject to her husband, as she thought that to do so would be uselessly annoying and troubling him.

Mr Sommerfogel had paid but very few and short visits to Mossdale during the last four or five weeks; on the occasion of the last of which, he had drawn Christopher aside, and told him that he hoped his marriage with the charming Paulina would now very shortly take place; that he and Paulina had been anxious to bring it rather sooner to a conclusion, owing to something rather untoward that happened to him in Strasburg, but which he would not enter into just then; that Madame Fantasque had been brought to give her consent. "You see," he said, "she had only to become acquainted with me, and then, how was it likely she would withhold her consent? for I may with truth say, that Augustus Sommerfogel has only to be known to be——but I'll say no more of that at present; you, my friend, no doubt know it perfectly well!" He then strictly charged Christopher not to mention anything about his now so near approaching marriage, not only because Madame Fantasque was so very fickle and whimsical, that if she heard the matter had been made public she might change her mind, but also because he wished it to be a surprise to the other members of the family at Mossdale, when he should come, as he hoped shortly to be able to do, and present to them "his charming bride."

"You seem to be amused, Christopher," said Mrs Harebell, soon afterwards to him.

"Yes, so I am," he smilingly replied; "it is about something that the garde-général has just been telling me."

"Oh! indeed; I wish he had remained until I had seen him, I would have asked him to stay dinner," said Mrs Harebell; who, ever since she had found out her mistake in regard to Lilian, had regretted the coolness and pique that she had shown to Mr Sommerfogel, whilst under that false impression, and who could not help attributing the infrequency and shortness of his visits now, to the fact of his feelings having been wounded by her behaviour; and being sorry and anxious to make reparation whenever she had since casually encountered him, she had been as polite and cordial as possible; but it seemed all to no purpose. He would neither come as frequently nor remain as long as he used formerly to do. And she said to herself: "I should not have thought that a person apparently so light-hearted and good-humoured would have taken such deep and lasting offence at what, after all, was only a slight want of friendliness and cordiality in my manner; and for which I have since atoned!" The garde-général, however, meanwhile, was in happy ignorance of the intended slight, and just as unconscious of the purposed atonement.

"I would have invited him to remain for dinner," repeated Mrs Harebell; "he always now makes us such very short visits."

"It is just as well that you spared yourself the

trouble, mamma," said Christopher, laughing; "he would not have accepted; he is too much and too agreeably occupied at present, to give us much of his time. But mum! I must not say any more. He left his compliments for the ladies; and would not stay a minute longer, as he was going by train to Strasburg."

"Well, I think it was merely an excuse, and I'm surprised——"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Christopher; "it was no excuse."

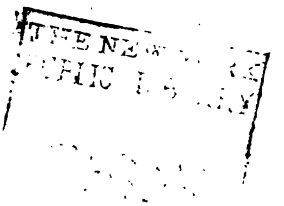
"I think you might let us share in your merriment, Christopher, by informing us of the cause," said his mother, slightly piqued.

"So I would, willingly; but don't you understand that it's a secret?" he said, still laughing.

Maud, who would have liked to ask some questions, looked wistfully from one to the other, but found no words, and remained silent. She was now thoroughly puzzled and perplexed by Mr Sommerfogel's conduct —always just as gallant whenever he met her; just as polite; always showing her the same attentions, and seeming to take the same interest in all that concerned her; and yet, latterly, to have made such long and unaccountable absences from the house, and to stay so short a time, and to hurry away when he did come! she felt troubled and depressed by the perplexity she was under; and had it not been for the promise she had made to little Bertha to comfort her mother, she would have given way to lowness of spirits; but she remembered that promise, and in her endeavour to keep it, prevented any particular want of cheerfulness

in herself from appearing. But she was far from happy, and her temper had begun to suffer materially from the uneasy state of her mind. She had become captious and irritable, and the slightest contradiction or opposition would often move her to tears.

In justice to the garde-général, we must say, that he thought very little about any attentions he had shown to Maud, and was perfectly unaware of the sentiment in which they were received by her. They were no other than he thought, as a well-bred man, were incumbent upon him, and such as he was in the habit of rendering to any young ladies of whom he had formed a favourable opinion, and who seemed to receive them with pleasure—as did Maud; and though, perhaps, if he had himself been disengaged, he might in her case have perceived something more; yet, it is to be presumed that, having his mind and affections pre-engaged, prevented him from doing so, for he certainly was not conscious of anything of the kind. To Lilian, however, Mr Sommerfogel did not pay the same attentions, because she had at once, and plainly, let him see that they were nōt agreeable to her; whilst Maud, on the contrary, had decidedly encouraged them; and although he felt at first rather repulsed by the former, still, as he had so unalterably high an opinion of his own agreeableness and powers of pleasing, he was neither hurt nor offended; and finding, too, that in all other respects Lilian seemed kindly and friendly disposed towards him, he came to the conclusion—in regard to the very small amount of consideration he gave to the subject—that it was a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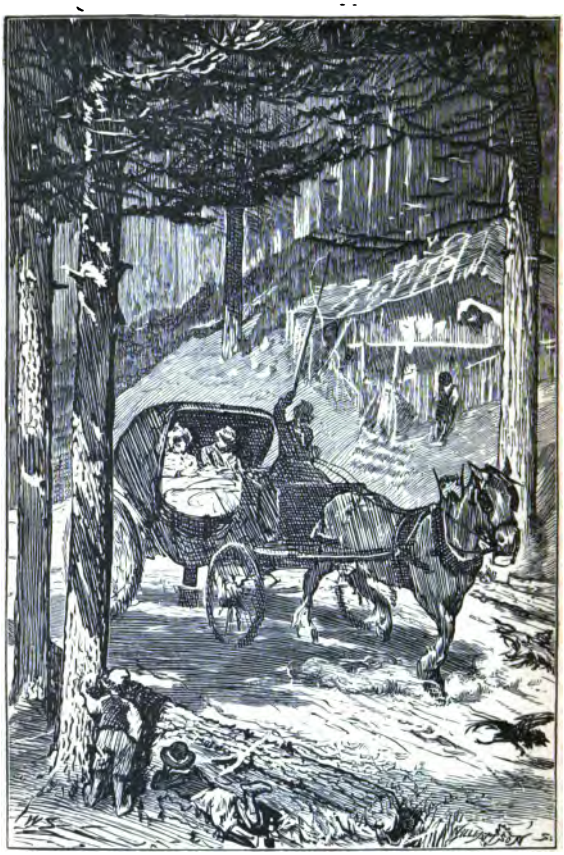

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peculiarity in her character, probably owing to national English coldness and reserve, and bestowing a double portion of his attentions upon her sister, thought no more of the matter.

"I wonder who can be coming in the shabby vehicle I see approaching?" said Maud, languidly, as she one day, a little later, looked from one of the drawing-room windows.

Lilian started, and changed colour, for she thought: "Perhaps it may be Mr Meadows returning!" and her colour went and came, and she trembled, but did not speak.

"Oh! I see a lady's dress on this side of the carriage. It will be some one coming to call. I'll go away, for I don't——" feel in spirits to receive callers, she was about to say, but, checking herself, added: "I've some work to finish. You can receive her, Lilian," and hurried from the room, just as a noisy, jingling, rattling old cabriolet, well bespattered with old mud, powdered over with fresh dust, and drawn at a jog-trot pace by a stiff old horse, with bells to its collar, approached the house, whilst the driver's important flourishings, brandishings, and loud crackings of his long whip, shaking of the reins, and repeated calls of "Allez! allez!" had no other effect upon he jaded animal, than occasionally to make it shake its head and jingle its bells; as if to say, "We understand each other. You very well know that I don't intend to go any faster, and I very well know that all the noise and fuss you make is mere bravado."

Lilian who, on hearing her sister's remark about a

lady's dress, had felt a pang of disappointed hope, now with indifference looked from a window as the vehicle drew up to the front door; and the horse—as was his wont whenever he came to a stand-still—gave himself a vigorous shake, and made his bells jingle violently, and then, to her surprise, out jumped Mr Sommerfogel. But with much greater surprise did she behold the lady who followed him, and whom he assisted, with every mark of deference, to alight. She could scarcely believe her eyes on seeing that it was no other than the dowdy, coarse, and masculine Mademoiselle Bourasque, whom she and Christopher had encountered in Strasburg; now, however, elegantly attired. And no wonder that, on seeing the carriage approach, Maud had only perceived a lady's dress in it, for so ample and wide-spreading were Paulina's skirts and flounces, that the garde-général was completely hidden behind them. After having been handed out by him with devoted attention, she shoved him to one side, and—leaving him to follow, carrying her shawl and cloak and a basket—she marched straight to the house-door, and gave a sharp pull to the bell.

"Allow me to have the happiness of presenting to you my bride—my charming——" began Mr Sommerfogel, as they entered the drawing-room, but Paulina cut him short, by saying:

"Fudge! nonsense! don't be stupid!" and going up to Lilian, she kissed her familiarly on each cheek. "I have heard of you, dear," she said, patting her encouragingly on the back. Lilian was a good deal

confused by the recollection of the meeting in Strasburg, but having then had on a hat and veil, she was not now recognised by Paulina, who thought that she was overawed by the magnificence of her appearance, and, whilst feeling pleased and flattered at the effect she produced, wished to reassure her: "Gus has told me what a good child you are; but you're quite buried here—quite, and that's what makes you so timid; it's a pity, for I'm sure you need not be ashamed of yourself. Is it not so, Gus?"

"Oh, my angel! your amiable nature is sure to think rightly," he began.

"Be quiet," she said, "and don't interrupt me. How often must I tell you that I don't like to be interrupted?"

"I was only going to say ——" he again began.

"But I don't wish to hear what you were going to say; therefore you may as well be silent," she said.

Christopher and Maud together now entered the room; and no sooner did Lilian see her brother's comical look of astonishment, of which she so well guessed the cause, than she felt an almost irresistible inclination to burst out laughing, whilst fully aware of the impropriety and excessive rudeness of any such proceeding, and had the greatest difficulty in preserving an appearance of gravity.

Paulina at once recognised Christopher, and now also Lilian—whom, it had already seemed to her vaguely, that she had somewhere seen before—and she blushed, for a deeper tinge of carnation, shining through her dark velvety skin, mantled in her cheeks. However, she

was the first to recover her self-possession, and apparently decided to ignore their former meeting; she therefore bowed to Christopher—to whom Mr Sommerfogel whispered a few words—as if she now saw him for the first time.

What with Christopher's astonishment and embarrassment, Lilian's difficulty to keep herself from laughing, and the garde-général's rebuff from his wife on first entering, which had made him feel timid, so that he dared not attempt again to introduce her in due form, Maud was not introduced at all, and knew not what to think of the scene she saw before her; looking wonderingly from one to another; surprised to see that Mr Sommerfogel instead of advancing to meet her, with his usual attentive politeness, remained awkwardly and timidly in a corner, half hidden by Paulina's large person, who now approached her, and taking one of her small delicate hands between her own massive palms, and addressing Lilian, said—"I suppose this little girl is your sister?"

Lilian bowed, not daring to trust her voice to speak.

"Ah! a nice little thing, and like you; hold up your head, child, that I may see your face," she said, placing her hand under Maud's chin, and turning her face up; "lighter complexion and much smaller features, but I see a likeness; how old are you, little dear?"

Maud, angry and astonished, reddened, and made no reply.

"Ah! bashful—very bashful, pretty chit!" said Paulina, complaisantly, as she stroked her hair, and laughed, showing a great many of the fine teeth in her

wide mouth, at what she considered as Maud's extreme timidity, and the effect of her own awe-inspiring presence.

But now Mrs Harebell entered the apartment, a servant having told her that visitors had arrived, and Christopher looked towards the garde-général in expectation that he would present Mrs Sommerfogel in due form to his mother; but he shrank still farther into his corner, and showed no disposition to do so, whereupon, smilingly advancing to the lady himself, and offering to take her hand, he was about to go through the introduction; when, becoming very red, and with a look of fury, she brushed rudely past him, and approaching her husband, in a voice trembling with passion, said—"Gus, you stupid creature! what are you thinking of?"

"I—don't know—I—my charmer—I—really don't know—I—my angel——"

"Don't know!" she said, exploding with rage; "of course you don't know! You don't know anything! You are the most stupid man, I do believe, that ever lived! Excuse me, madam, I lose patience, for he is so very provoking. How can you be so stupid, Gus, as not to see at once that you ought to present me?"

"Oh! with the greatest pleasure! my adorable," he said, coming forward with alacrity; "with the greatest pleasure imaginable. I am only too proud to have the honour and privilege of——"

"Nonsense! enough of that," she said. "Introduce me properly." And after a little hesitation, caused by being prevented from doing it in his own way, and which

again irritated Paulina, he did in tolerably suitable terms present her to Mrs Harebell as his wife, but could not forbear adding—"and who has so long been the object of my affections! the dearly beloved of my soul!"

"There, there! that will do," said his irritable and impatient wife.

Mrs Harebell received her kindly and politely, although she was very far indeed from feeling prepossessed in her favour, and out of regard for poor Mr Sommerfogel—for in her heart she now called him "poor Mr Sommerfogel"—she forced herself to say that she was happy to make her acquaintance.

As for Maud, no sooner did she hear the words—"My bride—so long the object of my affections—the beloved of my soul," than she felt completely stunned and stupified. She did not hear her mother's reply. Lilian spoke to her, but she did not hear one word of what she said. She seemed suddenly struck with deafness; only the words—"My bride—so long the object of my affections—the beloved of my soul," as spoken by Mr Sommerfogel, kept ringing in her ears. She left the apartment almost unconsciously, and found herself alone in her own room, hardly knowing how or wherefore she had come there. She felt as in a dream, and still the same words kept sounding in her ears. She seated herself beside the bed, and laying her head on the coverlet, tried to think. "That bold, forward, coarse, disagreeable woman! that woman his bride! the beloved of his soul! whom he has so long loved, too!" she said to herself. "Ah! so long loved; oh! how silly I have been! how stupid and silly!"

And the sharp pang of wounded self-love and humiliation that shot through her heart, effectually roused her. She raised her now burning cheek from the bed, as she said to herself—"If such is his taste—if such are his ideas of female excellence!" (she saw plainly that he greatly admired and was very proud of Paulina) "oh then, he never—no never—had the slightest admiration for me! I'm sure he could not like me—oh, no, impossible!" and she felt exceedingly mortified. "That odious Paulina" (she did not call her odious merely because she was now the wife of Mr Sommerfogel, but that sort of woman had always been Maud's antipathy), "that coarse creature treated me as a child, and probably the garde-général always looked upon me in the same light. I see—I see it all now! Oh, how stupid! how contemptibly ridiculous, I have been!" and she burst into tears of mortification and vexation. But, terrified at the idea that her mother or sister might enter the room, and naturally ask the cause of her tears, she hastened to check them—although she felt that it would have greatly relieved her to let them flow for awhile unrestrained. And now, the thought of her mother surprising her in tears, brought to her recollection the promise she had made to little Bertha, and as she bathed her face and tried to remove their traces, she said to herself—"Poor mamma must not think that I have been fretting. Oh dear! how foolish I have been!" And she very nearly gave way to a fresh flood of tears in thinking of her own folly.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"The low'ring eye, the petulance, the frown,
And sullen sadness that o'ershade, distort
And mar the face of beauty, when no cause
For such immeasurable woe appears."

COWPER.

MEANWHILE in the drawing-room, Paulina had given an imperious signal to her husband that it was time to take leave; whereupon he had submissively risen from his chair and prepared to obey the command. But Mrs Harebell, who now felt particularly friendly disposed towards him, said—"I hope you will not think of leaving us yet, Mr Sommerfogel; indeed, I cannot consent to your visit being made so very short; pray, stay and dine with us. Mr Harebell, you see, is not at home at present, and to fetch him from the works would interrupt him in his affairs; we dine a little later; but he will be here at dinner-time, and I wish to introduce him to Mrs Sommerfogel. Will you not order back the carriage and remain? Pray do so."

Instead of answering, Mr Sommerfogel looked irre-

solutely towards his wife, who said—"Thank you, madam, we will accept your kind invitation. Gus, tell the man to take the cabriolet back to the village, and return for us at eight o'clock; and, Gus, look well in the cabriolet for my smelling-bottle, for I don't know what has become of it——"

"You did not bring it, my angel. I saw it lying on the table in——"

"How dare you say that I did not bring it? What do you mean?" she said, on the instant becoming very red, and trembling with passion. "I tell you I *did* bring it! and don't know what has become of it. It is probably lying at the bottom of the carriage. Go and look for it, you tiresome, contradicting man! Well, why do you stand staring? have you not heard? Go, get along, and be quick!"

Her husband very well knew that she had *not* brought the smelling-bottle, for he happened to have seen it left lying on a table; nevertheless, he ventured no further remark, and quitted the apartment.

During this scene, Mrs Harebell had looked from the one to the other in astonishment, whilst Christopher felt much disgusted and very angry with Paulina, and Lilian blushed very much, feeling ashamed both for the wife and the husband.

Soon after, the garde-général returned, saying that he had given the necessary orders to the coachman, but could not find the smelling-bottle; whereupon Paulina said she was sure he had not searched well, shrugged her shoulders, and called him a simpleton.

But at length Mr Harebell came home to dinner—

which was quite a relief to his wife, as she was feeling rather perplexed as to how to treat her guests—and was presented to the bride; on seeing whom, he seemed more amused than surprised, and to understand her manners and character better than did the others. He led her in to dinner, placed her at his side, and was very attentive to her—on seeing which poor Mr Sommerfogel appeared to be exceedingly delighted, and moreover plainly showed the satisfaction he felt by relating some pointless witticisms, and then himself laughing immoderately at them, and for a while at first he was allowed thus to give way to his feelings, because Paulina was too much engaged with Mr Harebell to notice him. But he had not continued long to do so, ere her attention was attracted to him, and, with a frown, and something muttered about "folly and absurdity," she put a complete stop to the flow of his talk, and the flow of his spirits.

A servant was sent to call Maud, who now slunk into the room, and was about to place herself at the table as much as possible out of view, but in order to help to one of the dishes, her mother desired her to take her accustomed place—which, had she done at first, she would have escaped with much less observation.

"Do you not feel well, my love?" inquired her mother.

"Why, what is the matter, Maud?" said Lilian, in a low voice. "You look as if you had been crying."

"I'm afraid, my dear daughter," said her father, "to judge by your looks, that you are not in one of the best of humours. I wonder what has happened to put you so sadly out of temper? We should all be gay on such a happy occasion as this—should we not, Mr Sommerfogel?"

The garde-général bowed and looked pleased.

Maud, much confused, said she had a bad headache, and then felt very unhappy at having told such an untruth, which made her spirits sink still more. But thinking it absolutely necessary to appear cheerful, and interested in the conversation, she pretended to be so, which only made her feel more sad at heart, whilst she found it impossible to keep her attention to what was passing around her, and felt ashamed, vexed with herself, and altogether very miserable.

Maud Harebell was not suffering from disappointed affection, however, never having been truly attached to the garde-général—although she imagined herself to be so—and not knowing what such an attachment was; and now, even the slight preference which she had felt for him, and which she mistook for affection, had completely vanished; and as the husband of Paulina, he was not only perfectly indifferent to her, but also appeared in a rather contemptible and ridiculous light. What she was now suffering under, was a combination of mortified self-esteem, vexation, and disapproval, in regard to her own conduct, and a sensation of emptiness, a dull vacuity in her mind and thoughts, by the sudden tearing away of an

object that had for some time taken a large place in them.

As soon as the dinner was ended, during the latter part of which Mr Sommerfogel was mostly very silent, and the little that he did venture timidly to say, being immediately snapped at, contradicted, and completely put down by his imperious wife; whilst Mrs Harebell had become more and more surprised at her behaviour: Mr Harebell more and more amused at it, encouraging her to talk, which she did incessantly, not indeed requiring much encouragement, in her dictatorial manner, and loud masculine voice. Christopher's anger and disgust had also gone on increasing, and if Paulina had not been too much occupied to observe him, she could hardly have failed perceiving that the glances he cast at her were very far from approving! but she was completely engrossed with her own conversation, and keeping a watchful eye on poor Mr Sommerfogel; the consequence of which was, that she mercilessly crushed every attempt he made to converse; and on each such occasion, Lilian's face became more flushed, so that on rising from the dinner-table, it was indeed very red, when Paulina patted her on the cheek, and said, "Ah, my dear, now you look as you should do. I am glad to see you have such *bonne mine!* But that poor child, your sister, seems out of health. Your parents should take advice for her. I know a very clever doctor, whom I will recommend to them."

Mrs Harebell led the way to the drawing-room; leaving the gentlemen to have a stroll in the garden

and chat together. Maud was advised by her mother to retire to the quiet of her own room, as she had the headache, and seemed altogether far from well; which advice was at once gladly followed.

In order to begin a subject of conversation that might have some interest for her guest, Mrs Harebell said: "I suppose you intend to reside in the village; and if I can be of any service in assisting you to find a dwelling—though, of course, any to be found there, will require many alterations and embellishments—I shall be happy to give you what help I can. The house where Mr Sommerfogel formerly lodged, would, no doubt, be out of the question; and there may be some difficulty in finding——"

"Oh, no! Madam; it would not suit me at all to live in a village! It did very well for Augustus, you understand; but, for me, it would not do at all! No; I intend us to reside in the town of Langsamstadt."

"But will it not be rather far, rather inconvenient, for Mr Sommerfogel, unless indeed you intend to keep a conveyance?" said Mrs Harebell, hesitatingly; and immediately afterwards regretting having mentioned the subject, as she saw Paulina's colour deepen to a fiery crimson, and her eyes flash with anger, whilst she fidgetted with her foot on the carpet, as if very much inclined to stamp.

"Madame!" she said, her voice trembling with passion, "I don't see what right any one has to charge me with want of consideration for my husband's convenience! and——"

"Oh, dear no!" interposed the other; "I assure you

I don't intend to do anything of the kind! You quite mistake me. I think that if you and Mr Sommerfogel are satisfied, it is all that is required. I do not wish to interfere in the least, and did not mean to insinuate the slightest reflection upon you!" And she thought to herself: "In all my life I never did see such a termagant! Poor, poor Mr Sommerfogel!"

"Well," said Paulina, somewhat appeased, "I am satisfied with the arrangement, and Augustus had nothing to say in the matter;—neither do I see why he should—because I make a point of settling everything of the kind myself. And in regard to a conveyance, I shall tell him to hire a cabriolet sometimes, especially in bad weather. And you see, Madam," she continued, her fit of anger now disappearing, as suddenly as it had sprung up, "I cannot bear what seems to me like the slightest reflection in regard to any want of consideration in my behaviour to my dear husband, of whom indeed I have a very high opinion, which he truly deserves, being one of the most estimable of men! and so sensible—so remarkably sensible!—which every one must see; as also that he has the soundest judgment and the greatest discernment possible! as you, who have known him some time, cannot fail to have remarked!"

Mrs Harebell and Lilian exchanged glances: and the former, seeing that she was expected to make some reply, and hardly knowing how, said, "We have found Mr Sommerfogel to be very agreeable, attentive, and obliging, and I think we are considerably indebted to him for often making the time pass more pleasantly,

especially to the young people, since we became acquainted with him."

"Oh, no doubt he would make the time pass more pleasantly. But what is the most remarkable in him, is, his good sense; don't you think so, Madam?"

Mrs Harebell seemed to be seized with a violent fit of coughing; whilst Lilian appeared to be looking from a window with great interest at some object in the garden, although it had now become so dusk that she could not distinguish anything.

Paulina continued to regard Mrs Harebell, awaiting her reply; who at length cleared her throat, and said, "I am truly glad to hear you express sentiments so—so suitable—ahem! I mean so suitable for a wife to feel—ahem! and I assure you—ahem!—that I and my husband are—ahem!—most heartily disposed to give to Mr Sommerfogel his full and due share of our regard and esteem."

When she had concluded this speech, Mrs Harebell congratulated herself on having escaped from the dilemma tolerably well; especially as Paulina smiled so complacently, as to show the whole range of her pearly white teeth. Her countenance, however, the next instant, denoted the approach of another coming storm: the deep colour again mounted to her cheeks, the frown returned to her brow, and her dark eyes again flashed fire. "What can now be the matter?" thought Mrs Harebell; but soon she noticed that her irritable guest was looking at the time-piece, and that the hour was much advanced beyond that which Paulina had fixed for their return; and at the same

time she heard the tinkle tinkle of the horses' bells, the crack of the driver's whip, and the sound of the wheels of the cabriolet, considerably behind its time.

The coffee had been brought in some time ago, and yet the gentlemen did not make their appearance; and Mrs Harebell remarked that "they seemed to be forgetting the hour; no doubt, in agreeable conversation."

"Hum!" ejaculated Paulina, in very ill-humour; and then muttered to herself,—"The drone!—the dolt!—the stupid creature!" These pleasing epithets she applied to her husband, whilst he was just then forgetting himself in her praise,—expatiating on her amiable qualities, angelic disposition, and perfection in every respect, much to Mr Harebell's amusement, who led him on to continue in the same strain; and to Christopher's amazement, who, if he had before been inclined to think him rather silly, now thought him little less than "idiotic," as he said to himself, "to be so besotted, so bamboozled, as not to be aware of the ridiculous light in which he appears!" just as the delighted and inspirited garde-général concluded his eulogium on his wife, by saying:

"Indeed, my dear friends, I have every reason to look upon myself as one of the most fortunate of mortals!"

But the gentlemen now heard the loud cracking of the cabriolet driver's whip, and Mr Sommerfogel looked considerably frightened as they turned into a pathway that led to the house.

When they joined the ladies in the drawing-room,

the charming Paulina had worked herself up to an almost ungovernable fit of passion,—to Mrs Harebell's great embarrassment, who felt herself quite at a loss, and powerless to stem the rising storm; and to Lilian's confusion and dismay, whose cheeks had assumed nearly as deep a tinge as those of the enraged Paulina.

"I'm afraid you'll find the coffee nearly cold," said Mrs Harebell, apologetically; "it has been so long on the table; and as I was expecting you every moment to come in, I did not send it to be kept warm."

"I much regret, Madam, having caused you to wait so long," said the garde-général, glancing timidly and furtively at his wife, and hesitatingly advancing to take the cup of coffee presented to him by Lilian, but which Mrs Sommerfogel prevented him from doing, by resolutely placing herself before him.

"It was entirely your fault that we did not come in sooner," smilingly remarked Mr Harebell. "It was entirely your doing, Monsieur le Garde-général, that we remained so long in the garden; but I think the ladies may excuse you, in consideration of the theme which made you so lose sight of the flight of time. Don't you think, now, they ought to pardon you, eh? more especially one of them?"

"But Mr Sommerfogel did not appear to have heard, for, instead of replying to Mr Harebell, he answered his wife's look of fury, saying—in a state of evident trepidation:

"I'm ready, my charmer—this instant;—sorry to have kept you waiting—had no idea it was so late. Shall I fetch your cloak? or do you wish ——"

"No!" she said, in a loud, angry tone. "How tiresome you are! I don't wish you to fetch anything!" And turning, she abruptly commenced taking leave of her hosts, curtly thanking them, in rather an unceremonious manner, for the kind reception they had given her.

But Mr Harebell said:

"I don't see any necessity for such desperate haste Though the hour is somewhat later than you intended to stay, surely you have time to take a cup of coffee? I see there are lamps to the carriage; and besides, the driver knows the road well. I really do not think you run any risk; but if you feel at all uneasy, I will with pleasure have the horses put to my own carriage to convey you back: and you may safely trust yourselves to my steady old coachman and his well-trained horses."

The garde-général looked much pleased, as he said:

"The road is certainly in some parts very bad—so bad as to be dangerous in the dark, bordered as it is by low-lying ground, a stream of water, and other perils. My wife would, perhaps, feel easier in your carriage, therefore, under the circumstances——"

But here Paulina interposed, very decidedly declining the offer; would neither take any coffee herself nor allow her husband to partake of any; and determinedly persisted in leaving on the instant—her countenance, meanwhile, suggesting the idea of a volcano during a slight lull in a time of irruption; or of the sky just before a violent thunder-storm; the forced and ominous calm of the present, boding a succeeding

outbreak of double violence. And so they took their departure, Mr Sommerfogel not venturing to make any further observations. The cabriolet driver loudly cracked his long whip, and shouted "Allez! allez!" two or three times, whereupon the horse shook his head and jingled his bells several times, and then at length was heard the rumbling and rattling of the old vehicle, and Mr and Mrs Sommerfogel were fairly on their way.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Mr Harebell; "the garde-général has got a commander—ha! ha! ha!"

"I'm perfectly disgusted with her," said Christopher. "I could not have believed the man would have been such a fool as to marry her!"

"What a terrible woman!" said Lilian. "In her presence I felt as if I were continually receiving electrical shocks. I'm so glad that she is gone!"

"Poor, simple Mr Sommerfogel!" remarked Mrs Harebell. "How sad for him to have such a wife! I found her violence excessively fatiguing and distracting; and I now feel her absence to be as great a relief as you do, Lilian! Poor Mr Sommerfogel! What a deplorable thraldom he is in! I heartily pity him!"

"Pooh! fudge!" exclaimed Mr Harebell; "you little understand the character of the man! Heartily pity him, indeed!" just when he thinks himself one of the most fortunate and happiest fellows on the whole face of the earth! You don't seem to understand that if his wife were disposed to reverence and obey him—if she were of a mild and gentle temper—

he would despise her, and very probably tyrannise over and ill-treat her. You don't believe me, because you don't know that such a character is only amiable whilst——"

"Oh, I cannot think that he would really ill-treat any one!" said Mrs Harebell. "Recollect how very good-natured and obliging we have always found him to be!"

"Well, I feel perfectly convinced," said her husband, "that if he had been wealthy, instead of on the contrary very poor, we should not have found him at all good-natured, complaisant, or amiable in any way!"

"Then he is a despicable fellow!" exclaimed Christopher, scornfully.

"Softly, softly," said his father, "don't judge so hastily. I do not believe him to be more despicable than most weak characters either are or may probably some time become! But to return to the subject of his marriage. His wife's aunt has given her a handsome dower, so that he already finds himself in much more affluent circumstances than he has ever hitherto been; and as Madame Fantasque intends to bequeath to her niece all that she is possessed of, Mrs Sommerfogel will eventually inherit a considerable fortune. Now, it is my firm belief that this accession of comparative wealth for the present, with the prospect of so much more in the future, would have completely turned poor Mr Sommerfogel's head, and made shipwreck of the small portion of good sense that he possesses, were it not for the salutary effects which his wife's imperious temper have upon him. He well

knows that she is not wanting in a real regard and affection for him. She prevented him from taking coffee here, because it did not suit her, but she will take care that he has a good supper on their arrival at home, and the scolding he will probably get by the way will not do him any harm. You don't any of you seem quite to agree with me; but, ah! my dear," he said to Mrs Harebell, "do you not now plainly understand how great a mistake you have hitherto made in your behaviour to me? giving way to me so much as you always have done! and being so gentle and patient! But the mischief is now done—I am used to it—it is your fault—and now it is too late to change! so you must take the consequences! ha! ha! ha!"

And Mrs Harebell joined merrily in the laugh. Never since the death of little Bertha had she laughed so heartily.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Lovely, lasting peace of mind!
Sweet delight of human kind!
Heavenly born, and bred on high,
To crown the fav'rites of the sky
With more of happiness below
Than victors in a triumph know!
Whither, O whither art thou fled,
To lay thy meek contented head;
What happy region dost thou please
To make the seat of calms and ease?"

PARNELL.

MRS HAREBELL was now far from easy in regard to the health and happiness of her two remaining daughters, neither of whom, she could plainly see, was in good spirits, though each made efforts for her sake to appear so. In respect to Lilian, the gloom in which she sometimes found her, and at other times her forced gaiety, both almost equally painful to her to see, she thought she knew the cause of, and hoped that time would cure; but she was quite at a loss to account for Maud's dejection, and, attributing it to illness, questioned her regarding her health; who, fearing lest her mother

might guess the true cause of her lowness of spirits, which she thought would be so dreadfully humiliating, only gave her evasive answers, instead of assuring her, as she otherwise would have done, that she was not in any way suffering in health, and therefore Mrs Harebell was confirmed in her opinion. And a few days afterwards, she told Maud, it had been decided by her father and herself, that she should accompany an acquaintance of theirs, Madame de Mondaine, who was going with her daughter to make some stay at S——, in the south of France; for that they thought the change of air might be very beneficial to her, as she evidently was not feeling well, nor in her usual health. "And although Madame de Mondaine is not by any means a person whom we would choose as an eligible companion for you," said Mrs Harebell, "yet as she kindly offers to take charge of you, and as the change may do you so much good, I think we may safely trust you to her care; the rather, as I am persuaded that what I disapprove of in her, will have so little influence upon you! Of her daughter I know nothing, excepting that she is very pretty. But it is a great sacrifice to me to part with you, my love," she said, wiping away a starting tear, "a very great sacrifice, even though I expect it will not be for long—I feel so great a wish to keep you all with me. I know it is selfish, but it seems to me so sad——" and suddenly stopping, she hid her face in her handkerchief.

"Oh! mamma, dear mamma; don't be at all unhappy about it! I will not leave you! I will not go this journey; my health does not require it; indeed

you are mistaken in supposing that it does. I am not at all ill—only—only I have not perhaps seemed very lively lately—not very gay—but that——"

"Say no more on the subject, my dear," said her mother. "If you are out of health, as I am convinced you must be,—else why would you be less lively now than we have been used to see you?—this journey will probably be one of the best of means for restoring you. Of course you must go, my love; and I will try to cheerfully look forward to seeing you return quite renovated in health, and gay and happy as you used to be," she said, trying to smile.

"What length of time shall I be absent?" asked Maud.

"I think about four months," said Mrs Harebell, "unless it should be your particular desire to return before Madame de Mondaine comes back into this neighbourhood, in which case, your papa or Christopher would go to fetch you home; but you know that to do so, would be to either of them a great interruption and loss of time, which they can ill spare; therefore, I hope you may be able to make yourself sufficiently happy and contented at S——, to cheerfully remain there until Madame de Mondaine returns; and then, too, you will have given the change of air a fair chance of doing you all the good that I hope and expect it will."

"But what a long time that is—four months!" said Maud, much troubled.

"Ah, yes!" said her mother, with a deep-drawn sigh, whilst an expression as of sharp and sudden pain passed over her countenance.

Had Maud been observing Mrs Harebell's face just at that moment, she would probably have thrown herself into her arms, have confessed the true cause of her loss of spirits, and have earnestly begged to be allowed to remain at home; but instead of looking at her mother just then, her eyes were cast down, and she was engrossed with her own thoughts—trying to think of some reason, without telling the truth, which might still prevent her from going this journey, to which she felt a very great repugnance, as it was proposed and accepted for her under a false impression, and her conscience smote her for allowing it to be accomplished; but she could not think of any satisfactory argument wherewith to convince her mother that it would be as well for her not to go. Meanwhile, the conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Madame de Mondaine, who came to inform them that she now wished to leave sooner for the South than she had at first intended, and hoped that Maud would be in readiness to accompany her in a few days from that time.

Those few days passed over in busy preparations for Maud, she feeling as if carried forward by a stream too powerful to be resisted. The time seemed to her to fly by astonishingly quickly; and then came the last day—the day of parting, when she was about to leave her parents for what, under the circumstances, appeared to her a very long time to leave them; because she had allowed them to be deceived, nay more, she had herself endeavoured to deceive them, and had succeeded. And so she was going away, and she knew that it grieved her mother, and she thought of

her promise to little Bertha; and when all was ready, and just before the adieus had to be said, she went into her own room and wept bitterly.

"Why, Maud," said her father, on seeing her red and swollen eyelids, "I did not think you had been such a baby as to make so much ado about leaving home for so short a time!"

Her mother looked anxious and much pained.

Madame de Mondaine and her daughter Clarissa had themselves come to fetch Maud, which they considered as a polite attention, and rather condescending on their part. And not understanding how she could feel any grief at leaving home for so pleasant an excursion, supposed it to be mere affectation when they saw her again bursting into tears—embrace her sister over and over again, and then fall sobbing on her mother's neck, and seem as if she could not make up her mind to leave her; until, at length she tore herself away, just as Madame de Mondaine, in a loud whisper, remarked to Clarissa, whilst looking at her watch, that she was afraid all this acting—*cette comédie*—might cause them to be too late for the train, for she thought such a display very ill-judged and ill-timed, as being exceedingly disrespectful towards herself, and felt considerably offended. The pretty Clarissa laughed—a musical ringing little laugh, which made Maud start; and so she tore herself away from her mother—embraced her father and brothers—found herself placed in the carriage, she was hardly aware how or by whom—and being whirled away from her home at a rapid pace.

Madame de Mondaine and Clarissa were soon engaged in a lively conversation, but it seemed to Maud as if she either did not hear or did not understand what they were saying; for some time she could think of nothing but her mother's last look, and still seemed to see her face before her. Her travelling companions thought her excessively stupid and disagreeable; and Madame de Mondaine whispered in Clarissa's ear, that she was sure Maud had a bad temper, and desired her to take notice, as an example to be avoided, "how unamiable it made a young person appear to be so ill-humoured." Clarissa at first pouted, because she felt vexed at having any example held up to her—even one to be avoided—thinking that she needed none, and then she nodded saucily, and thrust her head out of the window, in order to put a stop to any further remarks from her mother, as she thought they were taking a rather too personal turn, and might become decidedly *ennuyeuses.*

As they approached the latter part of their journey, Maud became much interested in the change of scenery around her, and the air and motion had helped to revive her spirits; and had her conscience been at rest, she would have been surprised to find how little she felt disposed to think of what had caused her so much uneasiness when at home: the only circumstance that would have at all troubled her, was the pain that her mother had shown in parting with her; but even that would have seemed to her so very much less sad, if she had not been forced to think that it was caused by her fault.

"Well, Miss Harebell," said Madame de Mondaine, "I am glad to see you look more—more animated. A beautiful prospect over there, is there not? But, Clarissa, you had better shut that window. I'm afraid Miss Harebell, who you know has not been quite well, may feel the air too much." She was afraid of it for herself, as she had been suffering from rheumatism.

"Oh, mamma," said Clarissa, frowning, "it is so very warm! I declare I'm quite overpowered with the heat. Do you feel too much air from the window?" she asked of Maud.

"Oh, dear no!" replied the latter, "I like it."

"But I promised your parents to take care of you," said Madame de Mondaine; "and therefore I cannot allow you to run any risk. Clarissa, I desire you to shut the window."

Her daughter sulkily obeyed. And now, to Maud's regret, they had both the windows in the railway carriage completely closed; but it was certainly more prudent for Madame de Mondaine to have them so, as the evening had commenced,—one of those fine balmy evenings, however, so common in that part of France, when the air is so agreeable.

Clarissa drew herself into a corner, shut her eyes, and pretended to be asleep.

Madame de Mondaine, receiving no answer to one or two remarks that she addressed to her daughter, tried for awhile to converse with Maud; but they did not get on very well; for they found that they did not at all take interest in the same subjects. Although Madame de Mondaine had mentioned the scenery, she

merely did so for form's sake; she was not thinking about it, and did not like to talk about it, nor upon any other subject that would have interested Maud, who found that the whole of her conversation was composed of gossiping anecdotes of her acquaintances, and, for the most part, if not decidedly slanderous, they were exceedingly uncharitable and ill-natured. Now this was a style of conversation to which Maud had never been used, and which was not only perfectly uninteresting to her, but also excessively disagreeable; therefore she gave no sort of encouragement to Madame de Mondaine to proceed,—who thought her still more stupid than she had already done,—and being reduced to silence, soon fell asleep.

No sooner was Madame de Mondaine fairly asleep, —which was perceptible by her manner of breathing— than Clarissa, coming out of her corner, drew down the carriage-windows at each end; and then smiled and nodded with a look of intelligence to Maud, as thinking she would enjoy the joke. But Maud looked very grave, and said, "You should not do so; your mamma would be much displeased; come, let us shut them again." And she was beginning to pull one of the windows up, when Clarissa, with some violence, stopped her. "You shall not shut it," she said; "I will not let you; if you are afraid of taking cold, you may put on your cloak."

"I am not afraid of taking cold," said Maud, "and I like to feel the air. But only think of your mamma, and remember that such a current of evening air must be so bad for her rheumatism."

"Oh, she will take no harm! And now look from this window," said Clarissa, as she leaned out; "do you see those lights in the far distance? They are the lights of a place not many miles from the town of S——: we shall now be there before very long. Come and look at them."

Maud, however, first drew around Madame de Mondaine the cloak and shawl which were lying beside her, so as to protect her as much as possible from the effects of the night air as she lay asleep.

"La!" exclaimed Clarissa, looking round, "what a comical person you are! you'll be an old maid,—take my word for it!" she said, and at the same time throwing off her hat and jacket, and allowing her profusion of beautiful hair to be blown by the wind in disorder around her blooming face, in which just now the brilliant colour was heightened by the previous heat of the day, and to fall upon her snow-white neck and shoulders, uncovered save by a thin gauze. "Ah!" she continued, inhaling the fresh air with satisfaction, "how pleasant it is after being so warm! But now, do you see the lights? We shall not see those of S—— until we are close to it; it lies in a hollow—almost like being in a hole—an ugly town, too. I should hate the place, were it not for——well I won't tell you at present why I don't hate it. No, no, I will not tell about that just yet," she said; and evidently thought she had piqued Maud's curiosity, and expected to be questioned by her; when she intended at length to allow herself to be persuaded to tell, what indeed she was longing for an opportunity

and pretext to be able to do. But Maud showed no curiosity on the subject; in fact did not think at all about it: and instead, asked one or two questions about the country around S——; which Clarissa, disappointed, would hardly give herself the trouble to answer; and so they also relapsed into silence.

But after some time had thus passed, Madame de Mondaine made a slight movement and seemed to be awakening; which no sooner did her daughter perceive, than she hastily closed both the windows.

"How much cooler the air is!" said Madame de Mondaine, on opening her eyes; "and yet the windows have remained shut. I think I must have taken cold, for I feel so chilly, and with all these wraps, too, which I do not remember putting on: did you put them on me, Clarissa, whilst I was asleep?"

"No, not I," replied Clarissa; "how droll it is that you should have forgotten putting them on yourself," she said, bursting into one of her pretty musical laughs, which had often been much admired, and thought so charmingly natural, but which in truth were entirely acquired, being the effect of careful study and practice. "He! he! he!" laughed Clarissa, her round and rosy lips only just sufficiently parted to show to advantage her faultless teeth, without spoiling the shape of her mouth, or otherwise distorting her features; and at the same time giving Maud, who sat by her side, a little poke with her elbow; "how droll you are, mamma!"

"I don't think the matter so very laughable," said Madame de Mondaine, looking rather displeased. "I

fear my memory is becoming very bad. However, it's well I had the things on, or I should, no doubt, have taken a severe cold."

Clarissa pretended to be using her handkerchief whilst Maud felt her side shaking with internal laughter. Maud felt reluctant to tell Madame de Mondaine that she had put her wraps on, and so remained silent.

When they arrived at S——, the night had quite closed in, and Maud could only perceive that they passed through some narrow winding streets, and that the town seemed to be surrounded by high, dark masses, which her companions told her were rocks and mountains. She felt weary with the journey, and as soon as they arrived at the hotel, was glad to retire to rest; and for the first evening since the garde-général's marriage, she did so without giving one thought to that affair or her own humiliation; but she thought a good deal of her mother—bitterly repented having allowed her to be deceived—remembered her very heartily in her prayers—which were that evening more fervent than usual—more fervent than they had been for a long time—for she felt her own weakness, deplored it, and sincerely prayed for more strength; and almost immediately afterwards she was glad to find that both the will and the courage seemed at once to enter her mind, to write a full confession to her mother, and determined to do so on the following day, when she would have to write to tell of her safe arrival at S——; and although the confession would thus come somewhat tardily, yet she felt sure it would

be much better than allowing the deception to continue; and she felt wonderfully relieved, easy, and happy, as soon as she had made this resolution.

Maud then began to think about the companions of her journey, whom she did not feel at all inclined to like. "However," she said to herself, "it is only for a short time. I don't think now that it will seem so very long; it is my own fault that I am with them; and I must and will try to make the best of it." And her eyes, heavy with sleep, were soon closed in a sound and peaceful slumber.

CHAPTER XX.

" Is sparkling wit the world's exclusive right,
The fix'd fee-simple of the vain and light?
Can hopes of heaven, bright prospects of an hour
That comes to waft us out of sorrow's power,
Obscure or quench a faculty that finds
Its happiest soil in the serenest minds?"

COWPER.

TO give a description of the town of S—— would be irrelevant to this narrative, therefore we will dispense with it.

The day after their arrival, Madame de Mondaine complained of some twinges of rheumatic pains, but which passed off in the course of a few days. Maud had taken a slight cold, but which also soon left her; but Clarissa first complained of sore-throat, headache, lassitude, and pains in her limbs, and then was completely prostrated by illness, which was the commencement of a virulent attack of typhus-fever. Very ill she was; and so unmanageable, as very greatly to aggravate the symptoms and endanger the consequences.

"Oh! how unhappy I am!" exclaimed Madame de Mondaine one day, as entering the sitting-room where

Maud was, she threw herself into a chair, and burst into tears. "Oh! Miss Harebell, can you not say a word of comfort to me? But I don't think you can. Oh! what shall I do? That cruel nurse! she had the barbarity to tell me that she heard the doctor say that Clarissa is in great danger. Oh! I cannot bear to think of it!"

Maud was not surprised, for she knew it, and said that she was very sorry indeed.

"Clarissa will not take the medicine prescribed. Even between the attacks of delirium I cannot persuade her to take it. Oh! I don't know what the consequences will be!"

"Yes, madam," said the nurse, just then coming into the room, and having overheard the last words; "you say very true, the consequences may be very serious indeed if mademoiselle persists in refusing to take the medicine. From what the doctor says, it seems doubtful whether she will in any case recover" (sick-nurses not unfrequently speak to relatives of those under their care in an apparently very unfeeling way, familiarity with their occupation having made them callous to the possible or perhaps probable issue; they seem not to understand how those they are addressing must shrink from contemplating it). "But I feel sure, madam, that if she does not take the medicine, she will soon die. I have had a good deal of experience, and——"

"Leave the room!" said Madame de Mondaine, imperatively; and the startled and frightened nurse, not knowing how she had offended, did so.

"Oh! that horrid woman! to think of her telling me anything so dreadful!" she exclaimed, again bursting into tears, "to put such gloomy—such shocking—such detestable thoughts into my head!" she said, sobbing.

Maud thought, that although the nurse had spoken inconsiderately and abruptly, yet, the case being such, she had only done her duty in telling it; and said:

"But there does not yet seem to be any reason to despair of Clarissa's recovery; and if you could but induce her to take the medicine, who knows what good effect it might have? Would it not be well to inform her of the danger she is in? then, perhaps, she might consent."

"Oh! I could not be so cruel—indeed, I could not!"

"But to save her life, would you not tell her?" said Maud, in some surprise.

Madame de Mondaine made no answer for some time, and continued to weep. At length she said:

"I have never spoken to Clarissa on any such disagreeable subject. In my opinion, it is much wiser not to sadden ourselves with such dismal thoughts; and now, when she is so weak and ill, how can I—how can I make up my mind to terrify and shock her so dreadfully?"

"But to save her life?" again said Maud, now rather reproachfully. She would have offered herself to speak with Clarissa, but neither Madame de Mondaine nor the doctor, on account of the infection, would allow her to see her; and she added, in a low voice,

and rather hesitatingly, as not knowing how it would be received—"You know we must all die some time," and she would have liked to say something about the wisdom and duty of preparing ourselves, but the thought of being so much younger than the other, and of the impertinence it might seem in setting herself up to teach her, and also the feeling that she would probably not be understood, stopped her.

"Yes, yes," said Madame de Mondaine, rather pettishly, "of course I know all that as well as you; but where is the use of dwelling upon what is unpleasant, and making one's self miserable? Time enough when it is forced upon one, as unfortunately it is upon me now! Oh! what a terrible state of perplexity I am in!" and she wrung her hands in anguish.

Maud, much moved, wept; and going up to Madame de Mondaine, and laying her hand on her shoulder, said to her, in the most persuasive manner she could assume—"Dear Madam, do go to Clarissa at once, without waiting any longer, and tell her the state she is in, and—and how necessary it is that she should take the medicine. Oh, do go!"

Madame de Mondaine looked up, and seeing Maud's tears, they had a powerful effect in persuading her. She rose, saying, with a deep sigh and evident reluctance—"Well, I will try," and left the apartment.

Clarissa received the communication from her mother, given by her in a rather broken and incoherent way, as she endeavoured to soften and smooth it down as much as possible, but yet of which the other clearly understood the import, with much more calm-

ness than Madame de Mondaine had anticipated, who was delighted to find that it succeeded in causing her to no longer refuse to take the medicines. And from that time she began to recover, and continued gradually to improve until she was pronounced quite out of danger. But when Maud was congratulating Madame de Mondaine, and expecting her to appear happy and much relieved by her daughter's improved state, although she could not expect her to feel thankful, as she ought to have done, was surprised to find that she showed no signs of any such feeling.

"Clarissa is so tiresome," she said; "she is enough to weary any one! I am quite out of patience with her! She has the most exacting and unmanageable disposition imaginable! and so fretful when she is ill! Oh, so fretful! She is not satisfied with anything! The nurse has several times declared that she will submit to it no longer, and then what am I to do? Trustworthy nurses are not easy to find, and having had the fever so severely, the doctor says that Clarissa's complete recovery will necessarily be slow, and require a long time yet. Oh! Miss Harebell, I have indeed a weary task before me!" And so she would go on complaining, and Maud could not give her any comfort or advice, nor tell her, what she plainly saw, that both she and Clarissa were suffering from the consequences of not feeling and thinking rightly, owing to a want of religion; therefore she remained silent.

Meanwhile, Mrs Harebell had written to Maud a kind and sensible letter, which made her feel easy and

happy. On hearing of the nature of Clarissa's illness, Mr and Mrs Harebell had at once decided, at whatever cost of inconvenience, to have Maud fetched home; but they changed their determination on receiving a letter from the doctor who attended Clarissa, assuring them that in consequence of the arrangements that had been made, he did not foresee any risk whatever that Maud would take the infection; and if there were, she would most probably have taken it already, in which case it would certainly be much more advisable for her to remain and have the illness in that mild climate, rather than return to the ruder one of Alsace, where her recovery would probably be so much slower and more difficult; therefore they consented, but with anxious hearts, to leave her at S——, Mrs Harebell holding herself in readiness to leave for that place, accompanied either by her husband or Christopher, at a moment's notice, on receiving news of Maud's illness. No such news, however, arrived at Mossdale, for Maud did not take the fever, whilst she very much improved in health and spirits by the change of air and scene. She had been introduced to some of Madame de Mondaine's acquaintances, and was frequently invited by them; and never was poor Clarissa more irritable than on such occasions; so much so that her mother adopted the plan of not letting her know when Maud was out visiting, which she could easily manage so long as Clarissa was confined to her room. At length, however, she was declared sufficiently convalescent to leave her room. But how changed she was, from the plump, dimpled,

rosy-cheeked, sparkling-eyed, saucy little beauty! her form emaciated, her lengthened face, pale and sallow, with sunken cheeks and dull hollow eyes, and drawn, sharpened features; added to which, all her beautiful hair had had to be cut off during the violence of the fever; and it may be imagined that poor Clarissa was hardly recognisable as her former self. But what was the most sad to remark, was the expression of her countenance; the wandering, restless, troubled eye; the peevish mouth, with the corners drawn down; and the sullen and discontented look of dejection spread over her whole face. And perhaps, even still more sad was it to see how exceedingly anxious she yet was to look as well as possible; how much her thoughts seemed occupied with her personal appearance; how she was continually casting uneasy glances into the mirror; and how evidently envious she now became of the good looks of Maud, to whom she seemed to take the greatest dislike, and upon every possible occasion was saying something ill-natured of her or to her.

What should perhaps have been mentioned somewhat sooner, although it is of no importance to the tale, is that Madame de Mondaine was a widow, and Clarissa her only child. There was at S—— a Mr de R——, a young gentleman who had frequently called during Clarissa's illness to make inquiries after her, and who, Madame de Mondaine had informed Maud, was paying his addresses to her daughter, and that it would be a very advantageous marriage for her. He had not yet declared himself by making her an offer of his hand; and contrary to the confident

and reasonable expectations of Clarissa and her mother, never intended so to do;—he did not sufficiently respect her to wish to make her his wife. Without sound principles himself, and careless about religion, he yet looked for a very different character in a wife; but he admired Clarissa's beauty, and was amused by her wit and liveliness; therefore, in order to enjoy her society, he sought her out, and in some sort courted her, without caring or thinking more of the matter; and with characteristic selfishness he intended, so long as nothing came in the way to prevent it, to continue the same line of conduct, until either he had become tired of her, or had chosen for himself a wife. Mr de R—— was handsome, but had not a pleasing countenance; and Maud, who had frequently met him in the society at S——, felt an instinctive dislike to him, but treated him in a more friendly manner than she otherwise would have been inclined to do, on account of the position which she supposed he occupied in regard to Clarissa. But Mr de R—— had not yet seen Clarissa since the commencement of her illness; when one day—only a few days after she had been allowed to quit her room—he called at the house to make the usual inquiries, and was told that if he would return on the following day, he would be admitted to see her. He eagerly promised to do so, and seemed much pleased at the prospect of the interview.

Poor Clarissa! on that morning her toilette seemed interminable; and poor Madame de Mondaine! who was quite exhausted and worn out before it was

finished, by her daughter's fretfulness and discontented difficulty to be pleased. Clarissa had never before, as now, so particularly noticed how very much changed she was, and how ill she was looking; and was dissatisfied and found fault with all her attire—scolding both her mother and the servant—cried with vexation—and then, terrified at the idea of making her eyes look still worse than they already did, she forced back her tears. Poor Clarissa! she might well have spared herself all this harassment. But is not such the constant infatuation of those whose minds are not properly occupied? Do they not invariably torment and harass themselves about things that are either not of the slightest importance to them, or over which they have not the least control? Whilst at the same time, what would greatly tend to their welfare and happiness, and is quite in their own power, do they not often completely neglect?

However, at length this wearisome and unsatisfactory toilette came to an end, and Clarissa was led into the drawing-room only a few minutes before the time fixed for Mr de R——'s visit; therefore she had not time to rest, and in some degree recover herself from the extra fatigue and exertion which she had just undergone, and the consequence was, that she looked considerably more haggard than usual.

On first entering the apartment, and as soon as his eyes fell on Clarissa, Mr de R—— looked inexpressibly surprised and shocked—almost horror-struck;—but, too polite to allow such an expression to remain on his face more than an instant, he quickly recovered him-

self, and pretending to be delighted to see her, pressed the hand which she held out to him, and with apparently the most tender concern and interest, inquired after her health.

But Clarissa had marked that first unguarded look, and it seemed to pierce her heart, and enter in like cold iron; for she cared very much more for Mr de R—— than he did for her, and she had much difficulty in preventing herself from bursting into tears. She did, however, prevent it, but felt very unhappy.

Meanwhile, Mr de R——, possessed of too much tact to be at all disconcerted by the silence and restraint that seemed to creep over the whole company, chatted gaily on, until he thought that his visit had lasted sufficiently long to satisfy propriety, and then he rose to go; and, more from habit than design, in taking leave of Clarissa, he for a moment or two detained her hand in his, and again pressed it (which had no effect upon her, however, under the influence, as she was, of that *first look*), and most hypocritically expressed his satisfaction at seeing her look so much better than he had dared to expect; but his last looks, on quitting the apartment, rested on Maud.

No sooner had the door closed upon Mr de R—— than Clarissa, still weak and nervous, burst into an hysterical fit of weeping, which lasted some time, without her unhappy mother being able in the least to calm or soothe her, and who was much alarmed for the consequences. They did not, however, prove to be serious, in a physical point of view, only seeming to have somewhat weakened and exhausted her

for a short time, but she remained very gloomy and melancholy, and appeared to suffer much, mentally, for some time after.

It was not more than a few days after this occurrence at Madame de Mondaine's, where Mr de R—— had not again made his appearance, that Maud met him one evening in a society, when he was much more attentive to her than he had ever hitherto been, and greatly to her annoyance, scarcely quitted her side the whole evening; but regarding him as Clarissa's future husband, she would not allow herself to behave otherwise than civilly to him, and therefore submitted to his unwelcome assiduity.

As Madame de Mondaine, on account of her daughter's state of health, could not herself accompany Maud to evening parties, she always found one or other of her lady-friends who was willing to chaperon her, and to whom she gave her in charge. On the present occasion, when the time arrived for the breaking up of the party, the lady in whose care Maud was, proposed that, as the night was fine, and the distance not great, she and her daughters would accompany her on foot, leaving their carriage to follow them, to which she gladly assented, saying that the air and walk would be refreshing and agreeable to her, when, to her annoyance, Mr de R—— prepared also to escort her; and thinking it would be uncivil to decline his company, or the arm he insisted upon her taking, she accepted both—supposing, too, that as he had not lately been at Madame de Mondaine's, he might now be glad of an excuse for going to the

house, if not to see Clarissa, which he could hardly expect at such an hour, yet perhaps to leave some particular message for her, with her mother. The lady chaperon had the same idea, and whispered in Maud's ear, "I cannot compliment you, my dear, on having made a conquest, because I happen to know of another person who is Mr de R——'s attraction at that house."

When they had approached to within a short distance of the house, the lady's carriage overtook them, and Mr de R—— seemed strangely bent upon persuading her to enter it at once, and not to accompany Maud any further, saying that he thought she might well trust her to his care for the few yards she had yet to go; and she, looking upon him as an engaged man, and thinking he might wish to say something to Maud for her friend Clarissa, thought it best to comply, and with her daughters entered the carriage and drove off. But no sooner had they done so, than without preamble of any kind, Mr de R——, to her extreme surprise and intense disgust, told Maud that he loved her, and made her an offer of marriage. For the first few moments, she was too much astonished to make any reply, when Mr de R——, supposing that she hesitated bashfully in answering in such a way as he doubted not would be favourable, pressed her arm, which was lying on his. The sting of a poisonous reptile could not have had a more sudden effect upon her. She snatched her arm away, abruptly gave him a decided refusal, and rushed into the house, near to which they now were. He did not attempt to follow her, and she never saw him more.

Clarissa had long since retired for the night. Madame de Mondaine had waited up for Maud, but was so sleepy that she did not notice her agitation, nor seem inclined to enter into any conversation, which the other was glad to avoid, and therefore they both at once retired to their rooms. It was long, however, before Maud could close her eyes in slumber.

The next morning, Clarissa, who supposed that Maud had been enjoying herself extremely at the party of the preceding evening, whilst to her the hours had passed so dully and wearisomely, was more than usually captious and ill-humoured, especially towards Maud, who, more than ever heartily pitied her, and now bore her ill-humour with the greatest patience.

In the evening of that day, a lady, slightly acquainted with Madame de Mondaine — and who did not know that there was any rumour of an engagement between Mr De R—— and Clarissa, came to pay a call, and in course of conversation, said, "Are you acquainted with Mr de R——?" and, without waiting for an answer—"Because, if you are, it may interest you to hear some news about him, that I heard on my way here. I met a friend of his, who told me that he has to-day left S——, to make a very long tour, and will probably be absent for several months at the least. It is quite a sudden affair, it seems, for none of his friends knew anything about it until the last moment. What strange freaks young men take into their heads now-a-days!"

The lady spoke these words just as she was leaving, and the light in the apartment had become very dim. As soon as she was gone, Madame de Mondaine anxiously approached her daughter, put her arms around her, and spoke some words of endearment to her, but received no answer; and hastily fetching a light, she found that poor Clarissa had fainted; and when, after a while, she was recovered from the fainting fit, she had a violent nervous attack. Maud felt exceedingly sorry, both for her and for her mother, and went to her room that night with a heavy heart. Had she known, however, the news that awaited her in the morning, her heart would then have been filled to overflowing with her own sorrow.

CHAPTER XXI.

"Wide round the spacious heavens I cast my eyes:
And shall these stars glow with immortal fire!
Still shine the lifeless glories of the skies!
And could thy bright, thy living soul expire!

Far be the thought! The pleasures most sublime,
The glow of friendship, and the virtuous tear,
The tow'ring wish that scorns the bounds of time,
Chill'd in this vale of death, but languish here.

* * * * * *

The lonely shepherd on the mountain's side,
With patience waits the rosy op'ning day:
The mariner at midnight's darksome tide,
With cheerful hope expects the morning ray:

Thus I, on life's storm-beaten ocean toss'd,
In mental vision view the happy shore
Where Pollio beckons to the peaceful coast,
Where Fate and Death divide the friends no more."

MICKLE.

N entering the breakfast room on the following morning, Maud was much surprised to find there her brother Christopher, who looked a good deal fatigued and harassed. Her first feeling was one of pleasure, as, hastening to embrace him, she exclaimed—"How glad I am to see you! How did

you leave all at home? Why did you not write to tell me you were coming?" But, struck with the gravity of his manner, and the paleness of his countenance,—"Oh! Christopher, what is the matter? what has happened?" she said, anxiously.

He then, brushing away a tear, told her that their mother was very dangerously ill, having ruptured a blood-vessel, and that in fact her life was all but despaired of; that he had come to S—— in the greatest haste, having travelled all the previous night, to inform her of the sad occurrence and to fetch her home.

Tormented by heart-rending doubts as to whether she would still find her dear mother alive, Maud prepared to accompany Christopher,—whilst he went to take the repose he so much needed,—her tears falling fast as she did so, and as she bitterly reproached herself for being the cause, through her fault, of her own absence from home at such a time, and now also of her brother's forced absence and harassing journey. Madame de Mondaine kindly assisted her in packing; and so did Clarissa, as much as her strength would permit; for now that Maud was going, and under such sorrowful circumstances, she seemed to forget all her jealousy, for she had a heart originally capable of good feelings, but they had been stifled.

It was decided for them to quit S—— by the evening train, and travel during the night, so as to arrive in Alsace the next morning.

The sad leave-taking was now over, and very soon after Maud and Christopher were on their way back to Alsace.

Christopher, still much fatigued, slept during a great part of the night; but to Maud, the time, for the first few hours, passed very painfully and wearisomely; she felt extremely wretched and yet could not weep; tormenting herself with harassing doubts and fears; little Bertha's last words, too, rising up before her recollection to reproach her. Her wretchedness went on increasing until she felt inclined to cast herself on the floor of the carriage, and to cry out in anguish; but she restrained herself as she looked at her brother's pale countenance, with the deep marks of fatigue and anxiety under his eyes and around his compressed mouth, as he slept heavily. "Poor Christopher!" she said to herself, "I must let him sleep now. I must not awaken and disturb him with my sorrow! I, who have caused him this fatigue!" At length, and when her anxiety of mind was at its height, the thought occurred to her—"why did she not pray?" and then she did so. She prayed earnestly, then tears came to her relief, and she no longer felt so distressingly oppressed with sorrow, and began to feel more resigned to whatever might be awaiting her, and thankful to think that her mother was yet alive when Christopher left home; but she dared not dwell upon the thought that *perhaps* she might be so no longer when they would arrive. However, she had gained comparative calmness, although a dull aching sensation at her heart continued without intermission, and towards morning, whilst her eyes were fixed on the moon, fitfully appearing and disappearing amongst the floating masses of driving clouds, she unconsciously closed them in slumber. It

was a very uneasy sleep, in which she frequently started, and still constantly felt the aching pain at her heart, and was the whole time dreaming that she was in some dreadful but undefined trouble and perplexity. Suddenly, the stoppage of the train and the stir and bustle of their arrival at the station in Alsace, awakened her. On opening her eyes, Maud's first sensation was one of surprise at finding herself there; and then, quick as lightning, the *wherefore* shot with a pang through her mind. And now, soon they reached their home in Mossdale, where Maud was silently embraced by the other members of the sorrow-stricken family. She could not speak; the question she was so anxious to ask, died away on her lips, and she burst into tears.

Mrs Harebell was still in the same state as when Christopher had left to fetch Maud, hovering between life and death, and a gleam of satisfaction shone on her ashy pale countenance as, unclosing her eyes from an uneasy slumber, she perceived Maud standing by her bedside, and as she leaned over to kiss her, grasped her hand between both her own, and feebly pressed it. But she was fast sinking, and in one short hour afterwards, the spirit of the affectionate wife and mother had departed from its earthly tenement. She was quite calm and collected to the last, and passed away peacefully and without a struggle. Possessed of true faith and piety, and having led a virtuous and useful life, she did not seem to fear death, and met it with perfect composure. Let us drop a veil over the feelings of the bereaved family.

CHAPTER XXII.

"The charms which blooming beauty shows
From faces heavenly fair,
We to the lily and the rose,
With semblance apt compare.

With semblance apt, for ah! how soon,
How soon they all decay!
The lily droops, the rose is gone,
And beauty fades away."

FITZGERALD.

"A soul without reflection, like a pile
Without inhabitant, to ruin runs."

YOUNG.

AND now we will relate all that we know of the subsequent history of Clarissa de Mondaine; as she will not afterwards be again mentioned in connection with this narrative. Youth and a good constitution at length completely triumphed over the debilitating effects of the severe illness which she had passed through; and she recovered her health and strength, but not her beauty;—that was irrecoverably gone. Still, as she had good features, Clarissa was not, even now, at all remarkably plain; but having

been used from her earliest childhood to consider herself a beauty—to think so very much about her beauty, and in fact to shape all her thoughts and actions accordingly — she felt terribly mortified and disappointed on finding that she was one no longer! It seemed to her that her life was wrecked; her whole existence shattered. She became very discontented and much soured, which of course affected disagreeably her countenance and manners; so much so, indeed, as soon to render her very decidedly less pleasing and attractive than other young women who had no greater—in some cases much less—claims to personal beauty. Her inclination for wit and sarcasm, she still retained; but it was now so ill-natured as often to give serious pain or offence; and what had formerly been a pretty arch look—on a blooming happy face—had now turned into a very disagreeable sneer.

Rather more than a year after Maud Harebell had quitted S——, she casually heard that Mr de R—— had married a young lady, whom she had also seen there,—a remarkably plain, exceedingly quiet, and rather stupid, but very well-disposed young woman,—and she thought to herself, "What a contrast, to poor Clarissa, before her illness!" And at the same time she heard that Clarissa was still unmarried: who remained so for some time longer. And at length, finding herself rather avoided than sought after by the young men in the society she frequented, she began to be very much terrified by the idea of becoming an old maid, a fate of which she had the utmost imaginable dread; and this fear, which now haunted her like

bugbear, was very much strengthened and increased by her mother's evident disappointment at seeing her still unmarried; and the hints and innuendos she was in the habit of throwing out; as for instance: "I have just seen in to-day's paper that So-and-So is married, and a very good marriage too; I am sure she is considerably younger than you are;—as also are So-and-So and So-and-So, who were lately married—it is time for you to be looking about you, Clarissa; remember you are not more likely to become attractive by becoming older! and in fact I think you are changing rapidly for the worse, in appearance, and growing old very fast!" After having made such speeches, which put Clarissa into violent ill-humour, Madame de Mondaine would as much as possible keep out of her way, so as not to suffer from the consequences; but she felt quite satisfied that she had done a good stroke of policy in putting these ideas into her daughter's head; and so left them there to work and fructify. At length, Clarissa, tormented by her own uneasy thoughts, and goaded almost to desperation by her mother's taunts, made some very marked advances to a young man, who was considerably below her in position and education; which advances, he at first received very coldly, feeling neither admiration nor liking of any kind for her; but as she still continued them, he soon began to reflect that her fortune—which, though not large, appeared so to him—and her position and connections might be very advantageous to him; and then he responded to her advances, and ere long made her an offer of marriage: which she without hesitation at once

accepted: and then triumphantly informed her mother of her engagement. But instead of being pleased and congratulating her, Madame de Mondaine was very angry; told Clarissa that she had made a fool of herself; and positively refused to give her consent. Whereupon, Clarissa became as angry as her mother; and they quarrelled; the former taking to a violent fit of the sulks, and the latter doing nothing but complain of her hard fate and the ingratitude of children. But at length, however, wearied out by her daughter's ill-humour and persistency, Madame de Mondaine gave a reluctant consent—very much against her own judgment—to the marriage. No sooner did Clarissa experience no more opposition from her mother, and find every obstacle to her marriage removed, than, instead of rejoicing, she became anxious and uneasy. Tormented with harassing doubts and fears,—she knew that she did not really love, and felt that she was not truly beloved; the consciousness of having made the first advances became a very painful thought, and her heart sadly misgave her; but she would not listen to its suggestions; and willingly allowed the marriage to be hurried on, in order the sooner to put an end to the almost insupportable state of perplexity and anxiety in which her mind was. So the marriage took place. Clarissa escaped the fate she had so much dreaded; and—became a miserable woman for the remainder of her life! She soon heartily despised her husband, whom she had never loved, and now almost hated, felt herself humbled and degraded in her own eyes by having married him, and could not prevail upon her-

self to treat him otherwise than frequently with great disrespect or even undisguised contempt. Whilst he, disappointed at finding himself shunned by his wife's connections, and stung by her contempt, tried to console himself by lavishly spending the money gained by his marriage; and worse still, in giving way to intemperance. And his unfortunate wife now sees poverty and distress advancing upon them with rapid strides; whilst they lead a wretched wrangling life of mutual reproach and recrimination. And their children —for they have a family—with such examples before them, bid fair to become the severest instruments of punishment to their imprudent parents. A sad picture; but alas! only too true! Poor Clarissa sometimes heaves deep sighs, when she chances to see one of her former acquaintances,—who remained unmarried in order to attend upon a widowed and invalid mother, —and who, still unmarried, is actively employed in doing good, and looks the personification of peace and cheerfulness, whilst her own countenance shows that in bitterness of spirit she envies her former friend's peace of mind, freedom from gnawing cares, and all the constant and innumerable vexations and torments of her own unhappy and discordant home!

Madame de Mondaine is dead; she died in about two years after her daughter's marriage, very suddenly, of apoplexy; brought on, it was supposed, by a neglected cold and also uneasiness of mind on Clarissa's account.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"Every end is happiness, the glorious consummation of design,
The perils past, the fears annulled, the journey at its close:
And the traveller resteth in complacency, home-returned at last:
Work done may claim its wages, the goal gained hath won its prize:
While the labour lasted, while the race was running,
Many times the sinews ached, and half refused the struggle:
But now, all is quietness, a pleasant hour given to repose;
Calmness in the retrospect of good, and calmness in the retrospect of a blessing."

TUPPER.

AND now to return to Mossdale. Rather more than a year has elapsed since Mrs Harebell's death. Walter and Jasper have been sent to England to complete their education, and the family circle seems sadly diminished. Poor Mr Harebell feels very deeply the loss of his excellent wife; such a pleasant companion; such a comfort, prop, and stay in times of trouble; such a faithful, true, and affectionate help-mate as she has been to him! Oh! very deeply does he feel her loss! but he bears it as a man and a Christian, and does not repine. But in-

stead of as formerly being always lively and talkative in the evenings with his family, he will now sometimes sit for hours silent, seeming to forget to speak unless spoken to; and then will often answer absently.

Christopher has now much more on his hands in attending to the factory, because his father is no longer the active man he used to be; and he finds great assistance from Bernard Holzhacker, who is devotedly attached to him; and has got on so well in learning to make himself useful, that he has just been promoted to be an overlooker, and is about to be married to one of the most industrious of the young women employed in the factory, and is to live in a comfortable cottage, one of a set that Mr Harebell has lately built for his work-people, and is quite transformed in appearance, no longer wearing the cumbersome clogs, but good shoes, and being altogether well dressed. The other work-people now treat him with respect, and call him Mr (Herr) Bernard; and his countenance has quite lost the listless melancholy look it used to have, whilst the expression it has assumed instead, is an unmistakable proof that he has at least double or treble as much enjoyment and happiness in his present mode of life as he had in his former.

Fortunately for Lilian and Maud, they have plenty of employment in attending to the household and the poor of the village; otherwise, deprived of the society of their mother, their lives would now have been very sad and dull; and, as it is, they do sometimes feel very great want of her enlivening influence.

Nothing whatever had been heard of Mr Meadows

since he so abruptly quitted Mr Harebell's house, now fully two years ago, and his name was hardly ever mentioned more in the family; but Lilian, who was of a very constant disposition, had never ceased to think of him, and—excepting when she was more than usually desponding—to still expect that at some future time they would meet again, when all would be cleared up; but she never mentioned these hopes to any one. Thus matters stood, when one day a letter from Walter was received by Christopher, in which were the following passages:

"Whom do you suppose we met the other day in London? I don't believe you can guess. Why, no other than that odd fellow Meadows! On the first moment of recognising him, I seemed to forget how strangely and how ill he had behaved, and felt really glad to see him. I never could help liking him, in spite of his odd humours and queer reserve; and as for himself, he seemed delighted at meeting with us. I thought he might have been ashamed, but he did not seem so at all, which appeared to me unwarrantable assurance on his part; but I soon recovered my recollection of his conduct, and wonder now that I did not ask him for an explanation, as I certainly ought to have done, but something like a feeling of respect kept me back. It was very stupid and ridiculous of me. Respect, indeed! I don't know how I could be such a muff! As for Jasper, he said afterwards, that, as I was the spokesman, he did not like to interfere, although he wondered at my not asking any questions. Well, I wonder at it myself; but so it was. In the

meantime, however, I became cool enough in manner to him; but he either did not perceive it, or did not care for it, for he went on talking in the most familiar manner, and asking questions very particularly about you all, excepting about Lilian. I don't remember that he made any inquiries about her, at which I am rather surprised; however, perhaps he intended to make them later; but, when I had told him of our dear mother's death—on hearing which, he seemed, or pretended to be, very much affected—I took advantage of the momentary cessation of his questions, to wish him good-bye and abruptly leave him, although I saw was just on the point of asking me something else; he and he did not stop me. He looked as if he had not the courage, as if he were afraid to do so; therefore, I suppose, hedid at length begin to feel ashamed of himself—and time he should, too!"

Lilian was present when Christopher read aloud this letter, in listening to which, the other members of the family were so much engrossed as not to notice how she changed colour—at one instant flushed, and the next deathly pale—and no sooner was it ended than she hastily left the room.

"Humph! an impudent fellow!" exclaimed Mr Harebell. "Walter did wrong in answering his questions, or having any parley with him, without first making him give some account of himself, and his motives for——"

But here he was interrupted by the entrance of a servant, who had not been long in the family, saying that a gentleman, whom she had shown into the

drawing-room, had just arrived, and wished to see Mr Harebell.

"Very well," he said. "Tell him I will be with him immediately"—and turning to Christopher, he added—"I'll finish what I was going to say further about that scamp Meadows, when I return. This gentleman has no doubt come on business. I don't expect to be detained long."

And so he went to the drawing-room, his mind still occupied in thinking of "that ungrateful scamp!" as he was saying to himself when he entered the apartment, with a thoughtful look and downcast eyes. The gentleman who there awaited him was—Henry Meadows. He stood facing the door, on which his gaze was intently fixed, whilst hope, fear, anxiety, and eagerness were by turns vividly portrayed on his expressive countenance—as if each separate feeling were struggling for the mastery. He had a good view of Mr Harebell before the other's eyes were raised to see him, and when he remarked how much he had aged in little more than two years, how the lines in his face had deepened, how the furrows on his brow had accumulated, how his once cheerful countenance had assumed a look of seriousness almost amounting to sadness, and how slow and measured was his tread now, instead of his former quick and lively step,—Mr Meadows was deeply moved, so much so, that when he opened his mouth to speak, he could not utter a word.

"Ah!" ejaculated Mr Harebell, when, raising his eyes, he first saw who was his visitor. "No, sir! no!"

he said with emphasis, anger taking the place of surprise, as the other advanced without speaking, and held out his hand—"No, sir!"—Mr Harebell was always particularly and ceremoniously polite when angry—"you must excuse me—I don't shake hands with——" scamps, he had almost said, but checked himself; and, putting both his hands behind his back, as if to save them from contamination, he added: "I am surprised to see you here, I must say. However, no doubt you come to explain—which, in my humble opinion, you ought to have done, sir, long ago—and until you have explained your conduct, sir, I desire you to consider me as a stranger—a perfect stranger, sir. Pray be seated," he said, rather haughtily, as he took a chair himself, and pointed to another; "I am quite willing to hear any explanation that you, sir, are disposed to give, of conduct that—that at present appears to me to be perfectly inexcusable. Well, sir, I am all attention!"

"Yes, Mr Harebell, yes; I am come to explain my conduct," he said, in his deep manly voice, now slightly tremulous with suppressed emotion. "If you will allow me, I will explain all. And first, let me tell you that my name is not exactly that under which I have hitherto——"

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr Harebell, interrupting him, "Stop there! It is needless to try to impose upon me, sir,—as no doubt you did on the writer of that letter, who addressed you under a false name. However, that is no affair of mine, now that you are no longer in my employment, nor ever again will be; but

I give you notice that it is perfectly useless to try to——"

"No, Mr Harebell," he said, with a slight smile, "I shall not ever again be in your employment—at least, not in the sense in which you mean—but——"

"Nor in any other sense! But come to the point," said Mr Harebell. "I'm in no mood to lose my time in bandying words. To the point, sir; to the point!"

"I must premise by informing you that I am not what I appeared to be——"

"It is pretty clear to me, sir, that you now wish to appear what you are not!"

"Mr Harebell, if you are so impatient—if you continually interrupt me—I cannot explain," he said, reproachfully.

"Well, I will not interrupt you any more. But if you expect me to listen patiently, you must hasten and get it quickly over, for the sight of you irritates me; and also to listen to—— But it's of no consequence," he said. "Go on, sir; I will hear what you have to say."

"I must go back to where you cut me short. I am not what you were led to suppose me to be; namely, a young man without fortune, and who had to gain a livelihood by taking such a situation as you had to offer. My name is Henry Meadows Alton. My father, who has gone to his last resting-place a few weeks' since," he said, brushing away a tear, whilst Mr Harebell then first noticed that he was habited in deep mourning,—"My father, Mr Alfred Alton, was a banker; and I, his only son, was intended for the same occupation.

My mother died when I was still a child, and a widowed sister of my father's, with her only daughter, my cousin Laura, then a little child, took up her abode with us immediately after my mother's death; and put into my father's hands the whole of her small fortune, which he put out at interest. My aunt only lived a few years after coming to reside with us, and at her death she constituted my father sole guardian to her daughter; appointing him and Mr Swindles, a gentleman whom my father had just then been prevailed upon to take into partnership, executors to her will, leaving all that she was possessed of to her daughter. So matters remained for several years, and we supposed that all was as it should be, but during that time Mr Swindles defrauded my father to a considerable amount, and besides squandered all his own share of the profits—for he lived very extravagantly,—and I more than once heard my father remark upon it as being 'very imprudent,' but he knew not that it was also dishonest.

"And now, Mr Harebell," he said, pausing and sighing, and passing his handkerchief two or three times over his face, "I come to a very painful part of what I have to tell you. A few years before I offered my services to you, Mr Swindles absconded, having committed forgery in my father's name, and so obtained possession of the whole of my cousin's fortune. It was not long ere the forgery was discovered, and my father was arrested as the guilty party; and Laura—whom he had treated and loved as a daughter, and whom I had looked upon and loved

as a sister—Laura was the principal witness against him! She had, on the discovery of the forgery, been fetched away from our house by a relative of her mother's, with whom she was now staying; and who joined with a young man, a nephew of Mr Swindles, to whom Laura was engaged to be married, in urging her to bear witness against my father, in the hope and with the view of recovering some part of her fortune. Mr Swindles had succeeded in completely deceiving his nephew, and through him, Laura and her relative, who all believed my father guilty, and—and—he was sentenced to be transported," he said, groaning and covering his face with his handkerchief." Mr Harebell was rapt in attention, and did not say a word, but silently allowed him time to recover himself. After a while he continued: "Having naturally a taste for mechanics, I determined to employ myself in some way where I could make use of it, and for that purpose further worked at perfecting myself in the science; and when the situation which you offered was proposed to me by some acquaintances whom I had formed whilst thus employed, I seized it eagerly, being glad of the opportunity of quitting England, where I had lately suffered so much. And now I come to the time when I received the letter addressed to me by my real name, and which excited so much suspicion on your part. It was from my cousin Laura, telling me she had heard that my father was ill; how she had learnt it she did not tell me then, and it is not of any importance to you to know,—neither does it concern you to know the whereabouts of my father at

time. He had been removed from one place to another, and being ill, had not written to me; and my letters to him, being wrongly addressed, never reached him, and I therefore received no answers, which made me exceedingly uneasy. Laura, however, supposing that I knew where my father was, but knew not of his illness, wrote, saying: 'Although your father has so deeply injured me, yet I can never forget how that for many years he has been as a father to me!—indeed, before this most unfortunate affair, always as the kindest parent. How strange, then, that he could ever ——! But I will not further wound you, who no doubt have felt his disgrace so severely. Go to him now in his illness. I feel sure that you would not require any urging on my part to do so, had you known of it. Tell him that I from my heart forgive him, if you think that to know it will afford him any consolation. And if you could persuade him to make a full and entire confession, I think it would be so much better for him; but I have done—it is useless for me to say more—he is your father—you must act according to your discretion.' The contents of this letter drove me almost to despair. If I had written to Laura for my father's address, and had waited to receive her answer from England, a longer time would have had to elapse ere I could have joined him, than if I set out immediately myself, and travelled as speedily as possible; which, accordingly, I at once decided to do. Now, had I previously made known my intended journey, just then, in so weak a state of health as I was, I foresaw that I should meet with

great opposition; arguments that could not have changed my resolution, only have troubled and harassed me to listen to, would have been used to try to convince me of the imprudence and folly of what I was about to do; but much worse than that, I dreaded the questions that might be put to me regarding the cause and necessity for such a journey at, what must have appeared to you, so very improper a time. Recollect, too, that my mind was distracted; so I left you as I did! It was not right, Mr Harebell. I know that it was not right towards you; the only excuse I have to plead is the distressed state of mind I was in; and I am now come here, both to explain my conduct, and to—to ask—to earnestly entreat—forgiveness—from you—and ——"

But here he seemed to have a choaking sensation in his throat, and hid his face in his handkerchief. Mr Harebell, kindly and encouragingly laying his hand upon his shoulder, said: "Make yourself easy in regard to my forgiveness; but go on, I wish to hear all you have to say, before I give an opinion or make any remarks."

"I shall now soon have concluded what I have to tell you," he said, making an effort to recover himself, "for there are many circumstances and details of which at some future time I will inform you, if it would interest you to hear them; but which I now omit to mention, because they would take up too much of our time at present, and are unimportant as regards my father's justification, and the motives which led to my own conduct. Suffice it to say, that on quitting Mossdale

I proceeded direct to England, and reached my cousin Laura's residence in the shortest possible space of time. Her husband—for she was then married to Mr Swindles' nephew—seemed very much surprised to see me, as also did Laura herself, who had not expected me to come to their house; and at first they neither of them received me very cordially, nor without a considerable degree of embarrassment; but I cared not for any welcome from them; and having obtained the information I came for, immediately prepared to leave again; then Laura commenced asking me to stay, but broke down and burst into tears; and her husband pressed me to remain with them, at least one night to rest before going further; and when they found that I was quite determined not to accept, then they both joined in trying to persuade me to partake of some refreshment before leaving the house; but I felt as if I could not swallow any food then or there; so I left them, and as I closed the door behind me, I heard Laura weeping.

"I found my poor father very weak and ill; and so much aged! But I will not dwell upon that, nor upon our first meeting—it would overpower me, and prevent me from being able to conclude what I have yet to say; but ill as he was, he was hard at work, employing all the strength and energy he yet possessed, in writing out, revising, and comparing, a number of memoranda and documents; to the intent that after his death, which he evidently felt convinced was very near, they might possibly facilitate or lead to a clearing of his character, for which he ardently longed, and

told me that he constantly and most fervently prayed. In fact it had now become his one fixed aim—not on his own account, however; he cared little for that now—but on mine. Oh! how intensely did he seem to desire it on my account! But his strength sank rapidly, consumed by slow fever, and he began to be terrified by the idea that his strength would fail completely ere his task was finished, although I now assisted him; and the thought almost drove him to despair. I think it certainly would have done so completely, had it not been for religion; and soon now, he one day told me—with more of resignation than I could have expected, but still with a look of anguish, and raising his hand to his head—he must renounce the attempt, for that he found his mind no longer capable of the mental strain. He sank back, and covered his face. I said some words, I hardly know what, to console him; when I was interrupted by some one knocking at the room-door, and on opening it, I found that the postman had brought a letter from Laura, containing the intelligence that Mr Swindles was dead, and that he had on his deathbed confessed to his nephew, and a clergyman who was present, his guilt of the forgery, and of the dissipation of Laura's fortune, completely exculpating my father! and that a memorial to that effect had then been drawn up by the clergyman, and signed by Mr Swindles in the presence of two other witnesses. When my father heard this news he fainted; and it was some time ere I succeeded in restoring him to consciousness, so that I could hardly at first rejoice at the news, for I thought

it had killed him. However, after a while he came to himself, and after shedding some tears, which I had not seen him do before, since his condemnation, and returning thanks to the Almighty, he became comparatively calm. I will now cut my narrative as short as may be. Laura and her husband offered my father a home at their house, which he accepted; and I had him conveyed there by easy stages, as his strength would bear—all the time fearing lest he should succumb on the way; but he seemed so anxious to undertake the journey, that I did not like to offer any opposition; and it was accomplished without accident. But after our arrival, and although my father was the object of every possible attention and care, on the part of Laura and her husband, and a clever medical man, yet he continued to sink; and a few weeks after our arrival at B——, he calmly and contentedly breathed his last in my arms, with Laura, whom he had from his heart forgiven, and her husband by his side. And now, Mr Harebell, if you think any further exculpation necessary——"

"Say no more!" said Mr Harebell, hastily rising from his chair, going up to Mr Alton, and warmly grasping him by the hand; "not a word more about exculpation! I have to apologise to you for my harsh judgment; to ask your forgiveness for my——"

"No, sir! no indeed; I have nothing to forgive. It was natural for you to suppose,—but allow me to leave that question, for I have something yet to say, something that—that I have very much at heart! that I am exceedingly anxious about," he said, his colour

deepening, and a tear glistening in his eye, whilst he nervously wiped his face with his handkerchief; meanwhile Mr Harebell, somewhat surprised, silently waited for him to recover himself, and after evidently making an effort to struggle against some overpowering feeling, and hesitating, he went on to say—"I should first tell you that I am in what I know you would consider as very good circumstances. I was far from being, in a pecuniary point of view, in any want of the emoluments of such a situation, when I took the one with you. All that I wanted in taking it was, to remain hidden from public observation, and have constant occupation; and now I have received a considerable amount of property, being a great part of what Mr Swindles had defrauded my father, and which at the time of his confession he restored; and I wish you to know this, because——"

"Yes, yes," said Mr Harebell, interrupting him; "I take great interest in all that concerns you, and am heartily glad to hear that you are well off; but that is not the question at present; the affair to be attended to at present is, that you should rest now, and partake of some refreshment, which I will immediately order, and remember I shall now expect you to remain with me a long time, though not in my *employ*, yet as my *guest* and *friend*. Now that we have at length got you again in our grasp, you need not expect that we shall soon let you go again! therefore you will have plenty of opportunity for telling me later any more particulars regarding yourself that you may think fit to communicate; and I am impatient to present you to

my family in your new character; but first you must have some refreshment," he said, stretching out his hand to ring the bell; but the other, who during this speech had been struggling to keep down his rising emotion, stopped him, saying—"Stay, my dear sir, don't ring—I have something else to tell you before —before I can—rest or take any refreshment; but I will hasten—I will not keep you much longer—you must be tired," he said, hurriedly and nervously, and seeming to feel great difficulty in coming to the point.

"Well, but will it not do to wait until——" Mr Harebell was beginning to say.

"No, no," he said, "I cannot wait!" and making a desperate effort—"Mr Harebell, I have long had a sincere affection for your daughter, which had its commencement with my first appearance in Mossdale, that is, as soon as I saw her——"

"Ah! is it so?" said Mr Harebell, not at all displeased, "then the old doctor was right; but I did not give him credit for being so sharp-sighted!"

Henry Alton looked rather puzzled, as not understanding his meaning; but he saw that he was not displeased, which was sufficient to encourage and give him more confidence, and he continued—"Before I left you in so—so—unceremonious a manner—I had some reason to think—to—to flatter myself that—in short that—I was not quite indifferent to your daughter——"

"Ah, the sly puss, how completely she kept her own counsel!" exclaimed Mr Harebell; whilst the other felt somewhat annoyed at hearing the term *sly*, applied

to Lilian, as he supposed; for so much was his mind engrossed with her just then, that he seemed to have forgotten the fact of Mr Harebell having more than one daughter. He let it pass, however, without remark, and went on to say, "But with whatever feelings I might flatter myself I was regarded by your daughter before I quitted Mossdale, I greatly fear—I have serious doubts—that my long silence—my seeming neglect—my apparently inexcusable—Oh! Mr Harebell, I am exceedingly anxious and uneasy!" he said, in great agitation; "and I cannot rest until I know my fate! both as regards your daughter's sentiments, and your approval, if I should be so fortunate as to find them still favourable!"

"In regard to my approval," said Mr Harebell, "my dear fellow, you have it most heartily! But I cannot encourage you to hope that my daughter has retained her affection for you; whatever she at one time felt or expressed, she certainly has not been fretting on account of your silence and absence, for I never saw her looking better, nor in better spirits—for some time much depressed by the death of her mother," he said, with a sigh; "but I have latterly been rejoiced to remark her blooming looks and good spirits. I wish Lilian looked as well and were as cheerful! In regard to Lilian, I am very uneasy; I am sure there must be something seriously wrong with her health, and yet she never complains: and the doctor cannot find out what is the matter. But I will not trouble you with this subject just now. I will go to find Maud, and send her to

you, and then you can have your answer from her own lips."

But Mr Alton, who, during the former part of this speech, had looked deeply pained, started as from a reverie, as soon as Lilian's name was mentioned; and then seemed for a few moments too much overpowered by emotion to interrupt Mr Harebell. He, however, stopped Mr Harebell as he was about to leave the apartment, by saying, "You are under a mistake; it is Lilian—Miss Harebell—not her sister, whom I——"

"Whew!" said Mr Harebell, joyfully, and looking much pleased; "why then, I see now how it is! to be sure, I understand now perfectly!" and added to himself, as he left the room, "Poor Lilian! well, I'm very glad to think that she will not be pining any longer!—for it's pining she has been;—but what a buzzard I have been! I think I might have guessed, —however, I'm heartily glad."

Lilian's first feeling, on being informed of who was there, and desiring to see her, was one of overpowering joy; but then quickly followed, feelings of wounded pride and offended self-love, at having been so long neglected. But her father hurried her into the room, and she found herself in Mr Alton's presence, ere she had had time to collect her thoughts.

"Lilian," he said; "dearest Lilian!" She gave him her hand; whilst her happy blushing countenance showed that all was forgotten and forgiven in the satisfaction of seeing him again.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr Harebell, smilingly, "now, that is as it should be!"

MOSSDALE—Page 220.

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WE now pass over a period of about four years, nearly the whole of which time Lilian has been married. She is now the happy mother of a fine boy and a pretty little girl, the pride and delight of their grandfather, when he comes to visit her and her husband. Mr Alton having become attached to Mossdale, and acquired a taste for being occupied with the factory, and in benefiting and improving the poor of the neighbourhood, has, with Lilian's hearty assent and approval, become a partner with Christopher; and they together work the factory,—the former having brought so much capital into the concern, that they have been enabled greatly to enlarge and improve it; as also to make many additions and improvements in Mossdale,—such as the building a good house for

Christopher to live in, he being shortly to be married to a very amiable Alsatian young lady. Mr Harebell has retired from business, and gone to reside amongst his former friends in England; but he makes a point of coming every summer for a visit of two or three months to Mossdale. And great pleasure these visits give him in many ways; one of which is to note the various improvements that have taken place.

Maud, who has hitherto accompanied her father, is now about to be united in marriage to a young gentleman entirely suitable for her, and who has completely gained her esteem and affection, and at whose suggestion Mr Harebell has agreed to reside with them—all which makes Maud feel very happy.

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